FANTASY & SCI-FI DIGITAL ART

ImagineFX

YOUR DIGITAL ART ON SHOW

16-page gallery of inspirational fantasy and sci-fi artwork

See page 10

20 WAYS TO DRAW BETTER BODIES

Discover the secrets of the human anatomy

Turn to page 84

FREE FANTASY POSTER!

With artwork from the world's leading digital artists

FREE DVD INSIDE

All the files you need to create stunning artwork
Page 67

Also inside

Fantasy painting made easy
Create sci-fi characters in Poser
Learn how to draw manga
Design film sets in Photoshop
Turn photos into magical art

Create amazing
FANTASY ART

Master new techniques with our expert step-by-step workshops
Everything you need on your free DVD

Start on page 67

ALL THIS AND WE MEET THE MAN BEHIND THE ART OF **THE FANTASTIC FOUR**

See page 29

POWER YOU CAN HANDLE

THE CHALLENGE:
CREATE PROFESSIONAL DIGITAL ART
WITHOUT THE PROFESSIONAL BUDGET.

THE SOLUTION:
THE DIGITAL ART SUITE FROM DAZ3D.

BRYCE 5.5
The heart of the Digital Art Suite lies in this award-winning 3D environment creator. Whether you're designing for print, multimedia, video or the web, Bryce provides you with the tools to literally design a world of your own. Create realistic terrains, waters, skies, rocks, clouds, fog, and vegetation effortlessly. Available online for only $99.95.

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Add to Bryce an unlimited number of virtual actors, wardrobes, sets, and props through DAZ|Studio. This premier 3D figure posing and rendering application allows you to setup and import any combination of virtual subjects straight into your Bryce environment, and is available free to the public.

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Bring your creations to life with one of the most advanced facial animation lip-sync studios around. Take existing speech audio files of any language and let Mimic animate your figure while you focus on controlling the subtle nuances that will make your animation become award-worthy. With the ability to add and edit expressions such as winks, nods, and smiles, your figures can easily become as expressive as your imagination allows. Available online for only $199.95.

For more information on Bryce 5.5, DAZ|Studio, and Mimic Pro, visit www.daz3d.com.

www.daz3d.com

D A Z ®
productions

Cover artist
KYOUNG-MIN CHO

COUNTRY: South Korea
FAVOURITE ARTISTS:
Michelangelo, Rembrandt,
William Bouguereau, Craig Mullins,
Justin Sweet, Jon Foster
SOFTWARE USED:
Painter and Photoshop
WEB: www.black-eye.co.kr

Kyoung-Min Cho, the man behind our fantastic cover artwork is an illustrator and concept artist living and working in Korea. A well-known figure in the digital art community, the artist created this beautiful image for us from scratch over a period of 15 days.

Starting with a pencil sketch, Kyoung-Min Cho then scans this into Photoshop, adding clean lines and then begins to add colour. Painter is used along the way to add detail before the final touches to tone and lighting are added in Photoshop.

The artist takes his inspiration from a multitude of mediums, including books and music, and other digital and traditional artists. When he's not using his graphics tablet to create stunning pieces of digital art, Kyoung-Min Cho relaxes by reading books, playing games and watching movies – but he's always armed with his sketchbook just in case inspiration strikes. You'll find a coverline-free version of our stunning cover image on your free poster, which is inside this issue. ●

Introducing...

Featured artists

Every month, ImagineFX calls on the finest digital artists in the world
to offer you guidance, and share their techniques and inspiration

Robert Chang

One of the world's leading digital painters, Robert Chang shares his skill and thought processes with you in our exclusive tutorial beginning on page 68. You'll also find an in-depth interview with our first 'Master of Art' beginning on page 48. Make sure you check out Robert's website below for more on his life and work...
www.ethereality.info

George Hull

Not many have a résumé quite as impressive as concept artist George Hull. This is the man who brought The Matrix to life, being responsible for the awesome concept art on the Wachowski brothers' trilogy. George has also worked on Star Wars, The Lost World, Finding Nemo and Mission: Impossible. And you can learn to paint like him on page 40.
www.ghull.com

Jonny Duddle

Our favourite Peak District-based concept artist and illustrator snapped a tendon in his finger this month, but it didn't stop him showing you how to create a character revolve for game artists (page 74) or sharing his secrets of the human anatomy (page 84). See his amazing portfolio of work at the link below.
www.duddlebug.com

Steven Stahlberg

A true legend in the world of fantasy and sci-fi art, they don't come much bigger than Mr Stahlberg. Steven has joined our illustrious panel of experts answering your digital art queries and questions, beginning on page 36. Discover his techniques for painting smooth transitions between colours and much, much more...
www.androidblues.com

Henning Ludvigsen

Another seminal figure in the world of fantasy art, Henning Ludvigsen is a 2D painter working as the Art Director of an Athens-based game development company. He is currently working on the development of Darkfall (**www.darkfallonline.com**). You'll find his essential advice on painting skintones in our Artist Q&A on page 43.
www.henningludvigsen.com

Frazer Irving

Frazer Irving is a star of the UK comic scene. Having worked for 2000AD and DC Comics, he's currently working on the latest incarnation of Iron Man for Marvel. Frazer has been busy for us this month, answering your comic-related queries in our Artist Q&A (page 38) and sharing his drawing skills in an exclusive workshop (page 82).
www.frazerirving.com

Welcome to...
a new era of digital art

Congratulations. You've just become part of the ever-growing global community of digital sci-fi and fantasy artists. And we genuinely mean that. The idea that spawned the new magazine you're reading right now was to unite digital artists around the world; showcasing talent, sharing technique and inspiring you to create the best art you can.

So how are we going to do this? Well, for a start you'll find a massive 16-page reader gallery beginning on page 10. And make sure you send us your own artwork for inclusion right away – it's you that will make this magazine an inspiration to others, just as this first issue will inspire you. So share and be seen – you never know what it could lead to.

We also bring you interviews with the world's leading digital artists – awarding our first ever 'Master of Art' prize to Robert Chang on page 48. As you'll find out, this artist is an inspiration to anyone wanting to express their imagination through digital mediums. But we're not going to forget the revolutionaries that started the fantasy and sci-fi art phenomenon – check out page 54 for our first in a series of legends features: this month we bring you the art of Frank Frazetta.

Inspiration however, is nothing without technique. And our Workshops section (beginning on page 67) brings you the secrets of the masters of digital fantasy and sci-fi art. We've given the world's best artists a chance to teach you their techniques and they've obliged, showing the amazing amount of spirit in the community you've just entered into. By the way, above I'm standing in front of Tim Warnock's masterpiece – learn how to create it on page 78. And if you've got any ideas for future workshops, email me at the address below and we'll talk.

You'll also notice a free workshop companion DVD tucked into a wallet at the beginning of our Workshops section. This contains all the files and software you need to complete the workshops in the magazine. And when I say files, I mean high-resolution, layered files – giving you the chance to personally deconstruct digital images by world-renowned artists, in your own time.

There's not much more for me to say, apart from enjoy the issue, and I hope this is the beginning of something big – bringing together digital artists from around the globe to share techniques, artwork and inspire each other. I can't wait to meet you all...

Rob Carney, Editor
rob@imaginefx.com

Subscribe now! Turn to page 35
International readers turn to page 73

Five things...
you'll discover in this issue of ImagineFX

1 Human proportions
The common unit for describing the proportions of the human body is the head. According to reference books, an adult human is somewhere between seven and eight 'heads' high. Did you know that? **Page 84**

2 How to paint film sets
Learn the secrets of creating professional-looking film backdrops in Photoshop using a series of photographs and some clever painting techniques. **Page 78**

3 Manga computones
We teach you the secrets of creating authentic manga – learn exactly what computones are, and why you definitely need to know about how to use them! **Page 92**

4 Creative freedom
Discover that you don't need a huge amount of money to get started with digital fantasy and sci-fi art. You can pick up top-quality software for nothing! **Page 22**

5 Never ignore a muse!
Discover how your innermost thoughts and inspiration can come back to haunt you with our exclusive new comic strip, by Frazer Irving and Simon Spurrier, The Meddlesome Muse. **Page 114**

FANTASY & SCI-FI DIGITAL ART

ImagineFX

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Artist WORKSHOPS

"Learn to create a character turnaround
like this Berserker" **Jonny Duddle** (page 74)

Image: Jonny Duddle

WIN!
Massive
£2,165
giveaway
Turn to page 44

"My aim is to make my pictures tell more of a story" Jian Guo (page 56)

Image: Jian Guo

Reader FXPosé

THE PLACE TO SHARE YOUR DIGITAL ART

Monsit Jangariyawong
LOCATION: Thailand
WEB: http://monsitj.atspace.com
EMAIL: monsitj@hotmail.com
SOFTWARE: Photoshop, wings3d

This month's winning artist graduated with a BA in architecture six years ago. Since then he's been working as a digital artist. Now based in Thailand, his first loves are fantasy and sci-fi art. "They've always been my favourite themes," says Monsit. "It's fun to create things from your imagination, whether it's a monster or a space ship." His beautifully realised images draw on myth, film and Japanese manga.

1 DARK ASSASIN Created with Photoshop, it features a special agent in a galactic cold war scenario. "He has the ability to sneak into the enemy base and complete the objective," he explains. "But this new mission is not as easy as he thought – now it's time to test his close combat fighting."

2 MANTIS QUEEN This character is a complicated figure. Unlike your regular mantis, she isn't content to just eat her mate: "He must live as long as she wants," says Monsit. "The undead man is doomed to spend his life as her servant, lover or prey depending on her emotion."

ARTIST OF THE MONTH

Monsit Jangariyawong wins a copy of Exotique – showcasing the world's best CG females, and Elemental 2 – featuring the latest and greatest Autodesk art. Find out more at: www.ballisticpublishing.com

🇬🇧 Dan Conway

LOCATION: UK
EMAIL: arcipello@hotmail.com
SOFTWARE: Painter, Photoshop

"I've taught myself everything I know about colour, form and light," says freelance illustrator, Dan Conway. "People are often surprised by the fact that I don't use any layers or texture brushes, but that's just the way I've always done it." As for the subject matter: "I'm always wanting to capture a moment in time that conveys emotion." He likes to let the viewer dream up their own back story.

1 FORGET-ME-NOT What about inspiration? "Day-dreaming is often the best method for me," says Dan. "I tend to get little snapshots of a scene and if I like what I'm imagining I'll sketch it down." This was such a work.

2 FRAGILE SHELL Inspired by the animated series of Ghost in the Shell, Fragile Shell shows off Dan's brilliant eye for detail.

3 HER SILENT SILHOUETTE Dan works with a combination of Photoshop 7 and Painter 9. "I use Painter to sketch out ideas and work out composition," he says. "Once I'm happy with this, I transfer the image to Photoshop and work out the colours."
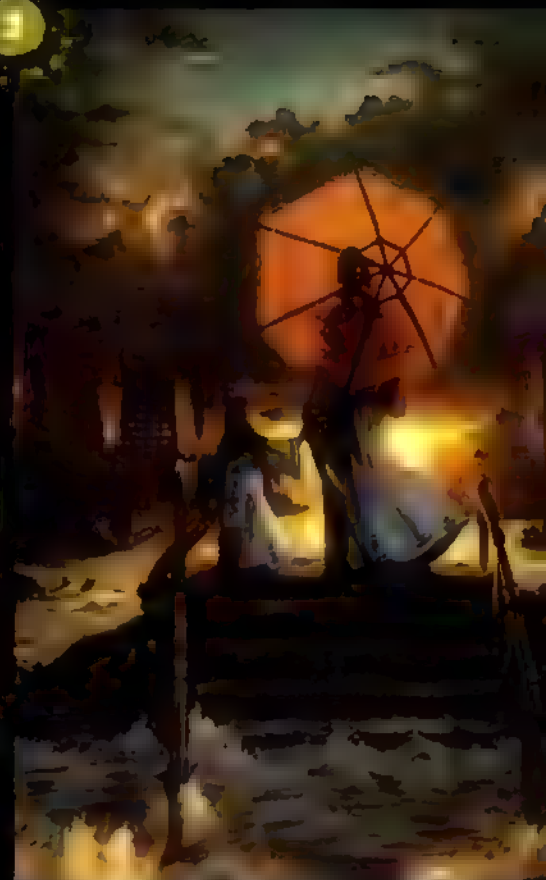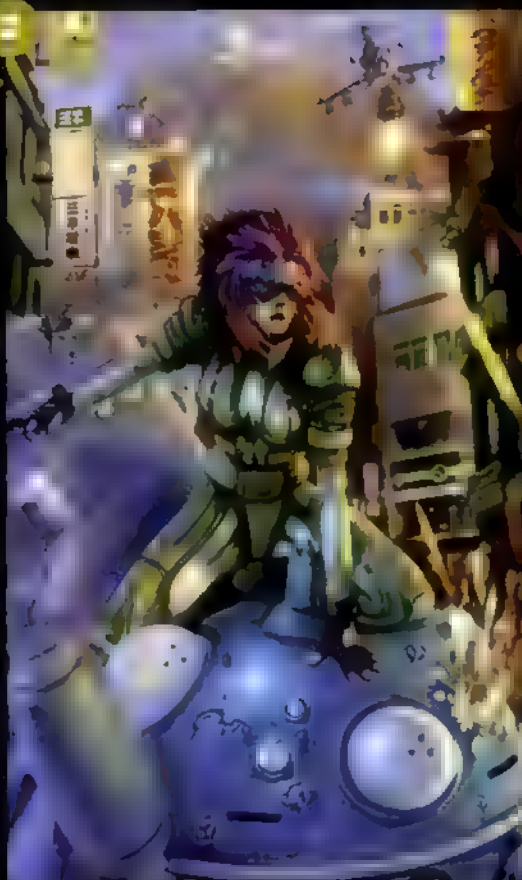
Sergei Kostick
LOCATION: Russia
WEB: www.raynoa.deviantart.com
EMAIL: raynoa@hotmail.ru
SOFTWARE: Photoshop

Sergei Kostik, commonly known as Ray Noa, is a 20-year-old student from Russia. "Digital art is my main hobby," says Sergei. "I began to draw on the computer about three years ago." But why does Sergei love sci-fi? "I like freedom. Freedom in thinking, living and creating. In art I feel free to imagine anything. Real life sometimes gets boring. Fantasy and sci-fi art make me wonder, feel something special and believe in dreams."

1 FARINA SILVER STAR Timelessness and silence are the themes for Sergei's brilliant Farina Silver Star. "I just wanted to show sadness and pure beauty in the sci-fi form," says the artist. "Even cyborgs have feelings. Sad feelings."

2 HELL VALLEY "The creation of fantasy landscapes is hard for me because there are so many things to think about," says Sergei. It all worked out, though: "I liked the result and learned about useful things like putting texture on a layer, then using hard light or the Overlay mode to create relief."
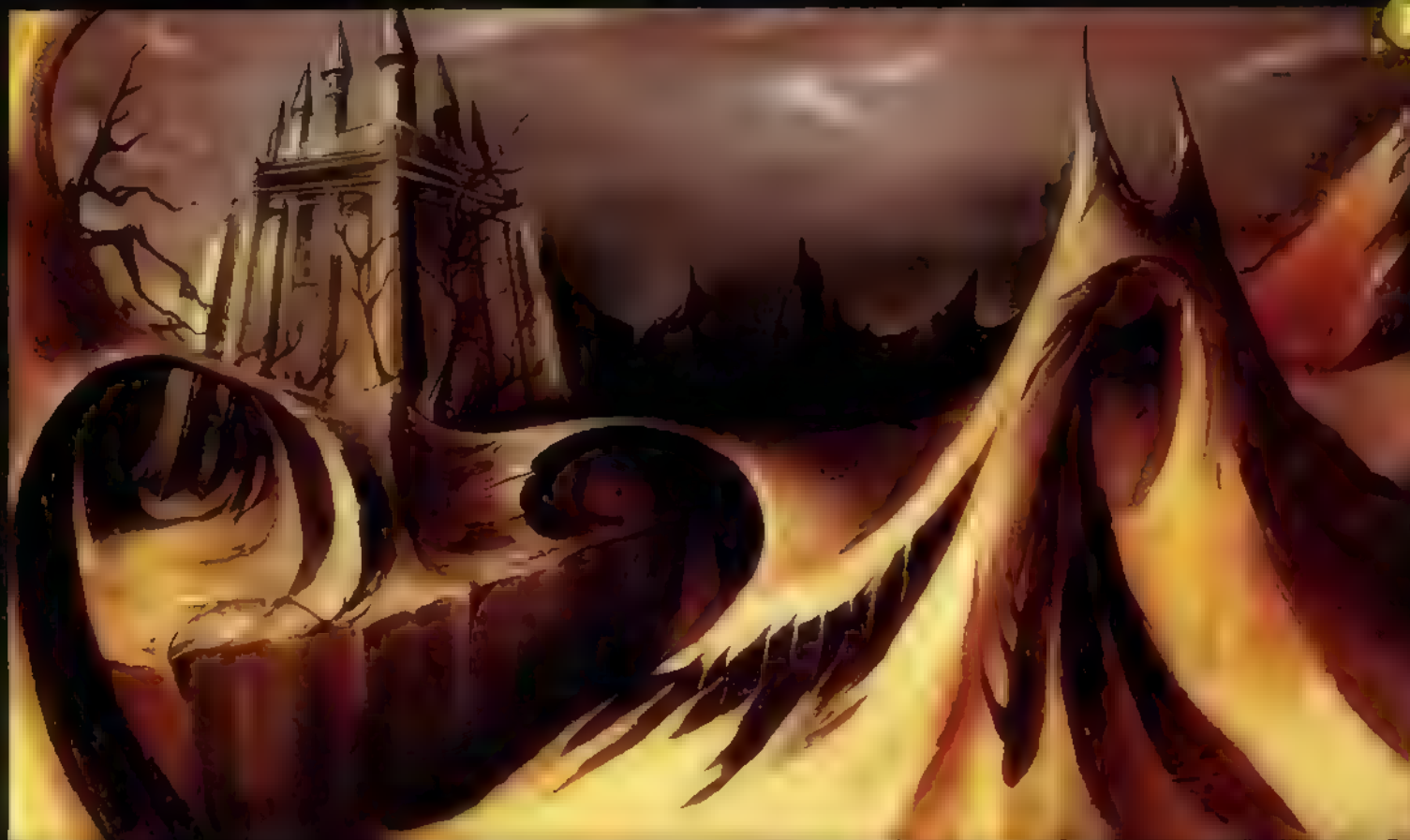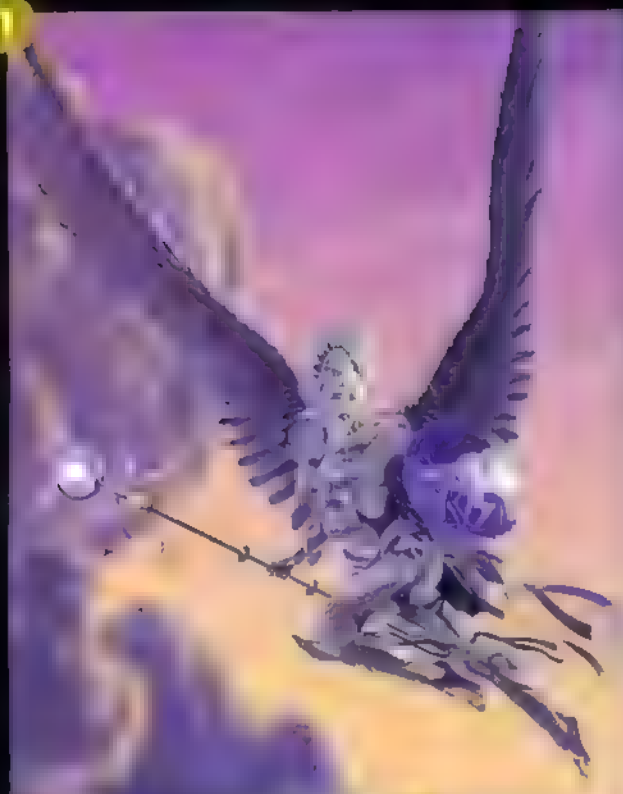
William Li

LOCATION: Netherlands
WEB: www.fenyx.com
EMAIL: william.li@fenyx.com
SOFTWARE: Satori Paint, Photoshop

"The driving force in my artwork is the wish to make the fantastical look real and believable," says William Li. "I guess that's why I'm now working as an industrial designer as well." Science fiction gets the lion's share of his off-duty efforts. "In this realm basically anything is possible, which is liberating to creativity." William started out with a wide variety of traditional media but gradually took up digital painting, vector art and 3D rendering as computer technology caught up with his ambitions: "Digital painting has been my preference over the years because of its flexibility."

1 ANGEL OF WAR "My preferred style is akin to classical realism," says William. This Angel of War wearing the celestial armour is a radiant example of that.

2 LIANI This is William's admittedly glamourous take on warrior women in fantasy.
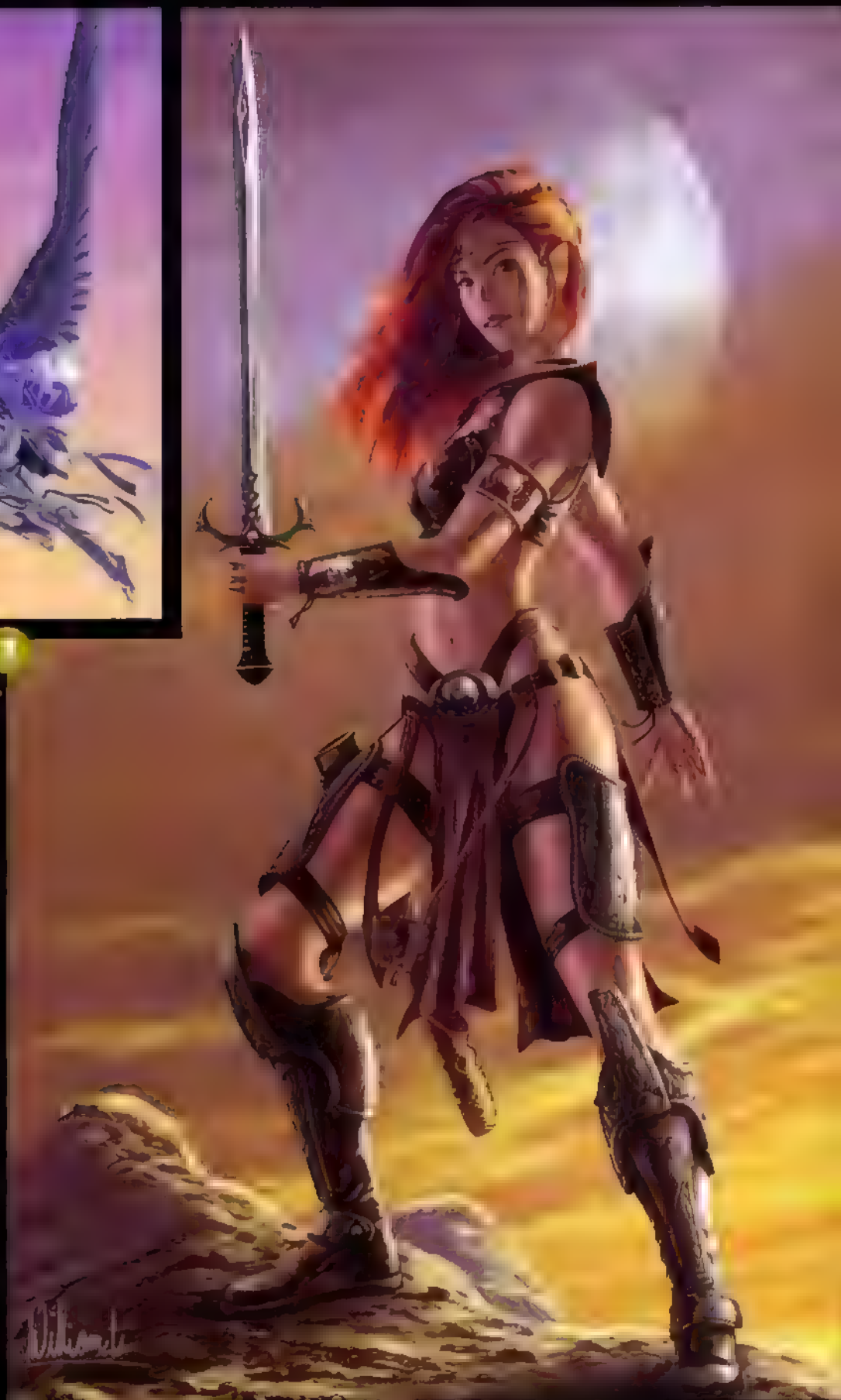
Riana Møller
LOCATION: Denmark
EMAIL: rm@watagame.com
SOFTWARE: Painter, Photoshop

Riana Møller had a tough time as a kid. "Raised in a small village and with more enemies than friends I started to develop imaginary friends and a private world to slip into," she reveals. Art came to the rescue as young Riana began to visualise her thoughts. Thinking of art as a profession came later: "I combined my concepts and ideas to design an ultimate interactive version of them: a computer game." Game designer had to be the prefect job, she added, where she could create worlds other people could enter and discover.

1 IN THE WHITE SWAMPS "This shows treasure hunting near Pearl Milk Harbour," explains Riana. That guy needs to watch out for reeds... they're a sure sign of soft ground.

2 HAPPY CAMPERS Happy Campers shows Riana (top) and Eufrath: "An imaginary friend from my childhood."

Michael Stewart

LOCATION: US
WEB: www.pyropainter.com
EMAIL: pyro@pyropainter.com
SOFTWARE: Photoshop

Michael Stewart has been drawing since childhood: "It's always been an escape for me," he says. His love of fantasy and science fiction art started with comics and continued later with videogames such as Resident Evil. "But nothing inspired me more then HR Giger's work," he adds. Perhaps a little worryingly, Michael relates that: "Most of my imagery comes from my dreams." Having taken up graphics, he was smitten: "I had the tools to make my imagination come alive." Using fire as a medium came about by accident. How it's done remains a trade secret.

1 PYRO Pyro is one of Michael's first fire paintings. "It is basically a demon casting a spell rejoicing in the inferno that surrounds him." Job satisfaction in the underworld.

2 LURKING IN THE DEEP This depicts a deep-sea angler fish, searching for its prey. Somehow it also makes the viewer feel a bit like a vulnerable, curious prawn.

3 HELL SCREAMS One of Michael's personal favourites, it depicts a demon screaming in anger and agony.

Pär Olofsson
LOCATION: Sweden
WEB: www.parolofsson.se
EMAIL: info@parolofsson.se
SOFTWARE: Photoshop, Painter

"I discussed my passion for sci-fi with a childhood friend, trying to figure out where it originated," says Pär. The two youngsters used to draw epic space battles long before they were even allowed to watch Star Wars. Conclusion? "I guess it came with birth." This passion got side-tracked at art school and during subsequent years working as an illustrator at an advertising agency. After a while he got bored with the job and slipped back to where it had all began: "Space ships and robots."

1 FORGET "As a kid I used to take long walks in the woods, making up stories about strange looking trees as I went," he recalls. "This image feels a lot like one of those stories."

2 FIRST FLIGHT "I think this is the first robot that I ever painted without rust," he muses. But a new robot with wings is bound to get hubris: "Certain death according to the ancient Greeks."
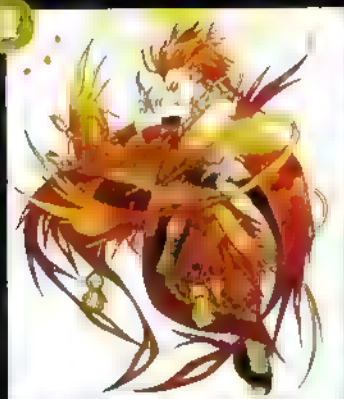
Christy Lijewski

LOCATION: US
EMAIL: PlasticPinkBunny@aol.com
SOFTWARE: Photoshop

"I've been interested in fantasy art since I was little," says Christy. That interest played a major role in her evolution into a comic book artist, although anime and manga are clearly a part of Christy's background. "I hope people will be able to look past that and find the other influences and meanings I put into my work as well," she comments.

1 WINDOW "I wanted to draw an image that made you feel as if you were someplace high without actually showing the ground in relation to the viewer," explains Christy.

2 ROOSTER This was created as a celebratory piece for the Chinese New Year in 2005, the Year of the Cock. "Suzaku is actually a Phoenix so I played up the red and yellow hues to help give the warm, fiery feeling the God represents."

3 KING OF PENANCE This is the first in a series of playing cards Christy has been designing. "The King was the only card to represent repentance while the other cards all represented a different indulgence or sin," she says.

▨ Keun-chul Jang

LOCATION: Korea
WEB: www.keunchul.vslx.net
EMAIL: jkc1982@naver.com
SOFTWARE: Painter, Photoshop

Keun-chul, also known as Iron Brush, is among a new generation of Korean artists who are producing amazing artwork. He uses beautifully deep textures, inherited from a background in traditional media. "I loved comics when I was small but I didn't paint much till I began to study illustration," he says. "Korea has loads of great CG sites. Through those I took an interest in digital art." He progressed from a manga style into his own look which has brought him work on book covers and game art.

1 050719D A kind of organic future-tech from the mind of Iron Brush.

2 ILLUSTO There is a surprising amount of emotion conveyed here but don't let that fool you. Mess with this pair and they'll have your head on a stick.

3 MACHO That looks heavy! Iron Brush shows how to convey depth, power and solidity with pixels.
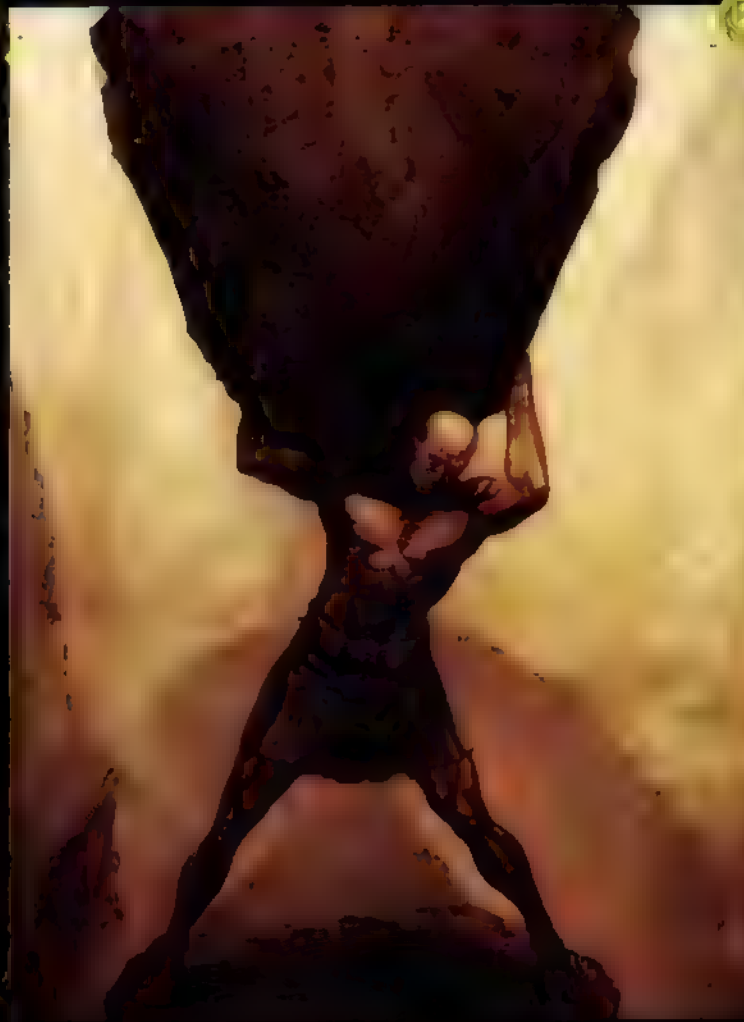
Teodoro Gonzalez

LOCATION: Venezuela
WEB: www.deffectx.deviantart.com/
EMAIL: deffectx@gmail.com
SOFTWARE: Photoshop, Painter

Teodoro is a freelance colourist and designer who has worked on comic and illustration projects in the US and Brazil, and as a graphic designer in Venezuela. His colouring work brings to life images created by others. He rubs shoulders with some of the best pencils around, breathing life into their black and white. Currently studying graphic design and working on a stack of freelance comic jobs, Teodoro cites important influences in Hyung Tae Kim, Danimation, Craig Mullins and "many more." He says the collaborative nature of his work shows the great good will among the comic fraternity.

1 NINJA DUDE This Ninja concept, pencilled by Jonboy Meyers (www. jonboy007007.deviantart.com) and coloured by Teodoro, was produced just for fun.

2 TALIM In tribute to the arch-swordplay of Soul Calibur 2, this character, Talim, was pencilled by Harvey Tolibao (www.harveytolibao. deviantart.com/) and then coloured by Teodoro.

3 PEPPER An original character design, pencilled by Stanley Lau of Imaginary Friends (www.imaginaryfs. com) has been brought to life with the gift of colour, courtesy of Teodoro.

🇳🇴 Øyvind Sørøy
LOCATION: Norway
WEB: http://quakeulf.suxos.org/bilder/?M=D
EMAIL: quakeulf@mandatory.org
SOFTWARE: Photoskop, Painter, Illustrator, GTKRadiant

"As a kid I used to like Star Wars, a lot," says Øyvind. "Then I saw Ghost in the Shell, on TV, and my childish amazement overpowered anything reasonable. I wanted the world to be like that!" Now, at university, he adds: "I still enjoy its elaborate background art, it's had a huge impact on my work."

1 MARIKO WITH GUN "It should come as no surprise that I like big guns," relates Øyvind. "The gun she is holding is The Great Logic Defier, as it fires huge beams of concentrated laser from a tiny power source within the gun."

2 GIRL WITH GUN "This girl had a bad head day and her forehead started expanding, pushing her eyes and nose down and her hairline all the way up. So to combat her frustrations she grabbed the biggest gun ever and started killing people, while at the same time making sure not to stain her sweater."

3 MAJA ON A BRIDGE "This portrays my half-ways dystopian future view of my home town, Oslo," explains Øyvind. It is a combination of Neo-Tokyo from Akira, and Christiania, the old name of Oslo. "The signs are all in Japanese, but only a few of them actually make any sense." ●
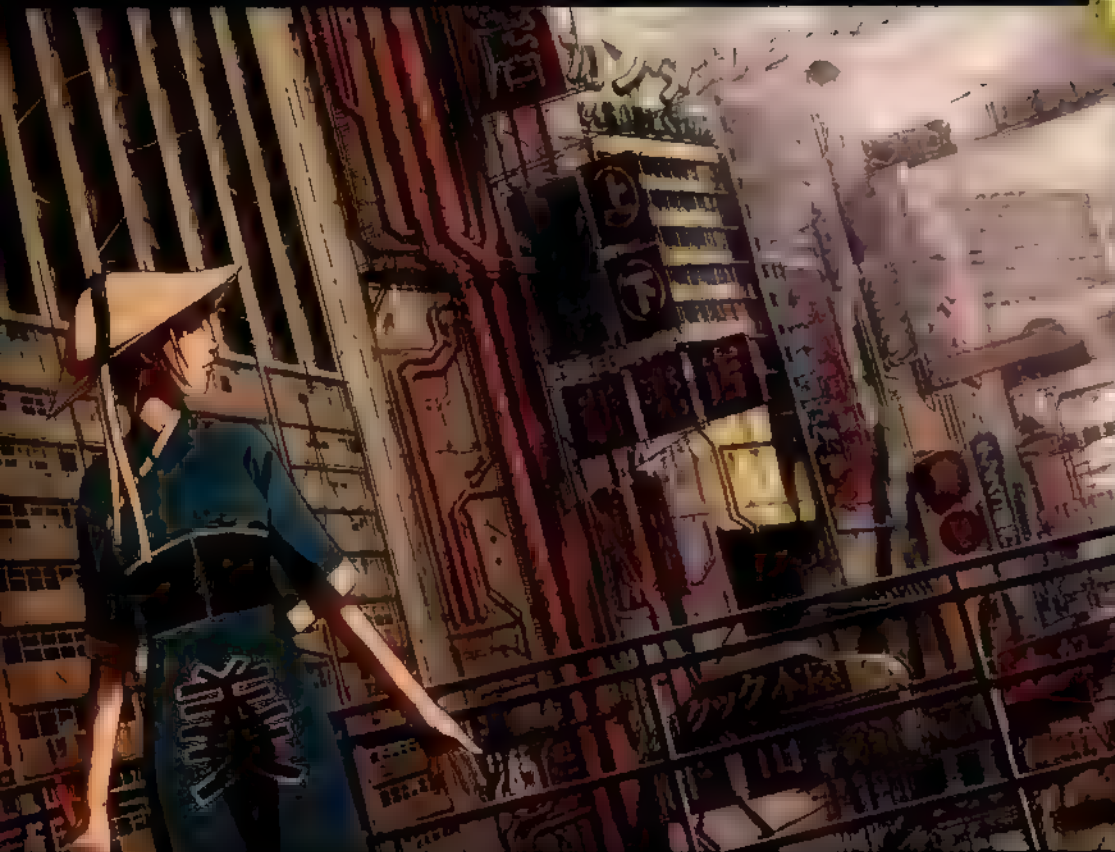
TODD LOCKWOOD
The renowned fantasy artist begins his regular opinion column for us, tackling the subject of exactly what 'fantasy art' means. See if you agree with him
Page 26

MEET MR FANTASTIC
Fantastic Four concept artist Patrick Janicke spills the beans on what it takes to make it as a professional production artist in Hollywood
Page 29

DIGITAL HEROES
Meet the new generation of digital comic artists making their impression on the industry. And, we introduce our own comic heroine
Page 30

Creativity costs nothing

In-depth: You don't need to spend a fortune on software to become a digital fantasy artist – you just need to know where to look...

The steep price of commercial software is a serious obstacle to many fledgling fantasy artists, especially high-end fare such as Photoshop and Painter. But for as long as there has been digital art, there has been free software to create it – you just need to know where to find it. All it takes is a little digging on the web to discover plenty of excellent packages, available either entirely free or at little cost.

DAZ!Studio (**www.daz3d.com**) is just one such free application, for both Mac and PC users, and is well established in the fantasy art field. Essentially it's a 3D rendering program but what creators DAZ Productions hope

> 66 Being artists we tend to think that most computer graphics software is too expensive 99

differentiates their product is what it calls professional-quality and other content. There's a wealth of good 3D packages, though the emphasis is on ease of use with a tool that can operate and be readily understandable to graphics

While the notion of a free application might seem too good to be true, there's a simple rationale behind it. The company's main focus is its library of 2,000 models, and it hopes that users of their software packages. By providing free software, DAZ!Studio...

hopes that satisfied users will go on to buy commercial content.

DAZ|Studio will always be free, promises Dan Farr, the firm's CEO. "With the acquisition and development of the original 3D packages by DAZ," but not have to spend cash, is the companies, of introducing higher-end for sale versions," he says.

And what if you find yourself is the need for a Renderosity and could offer to create more traditional features. Always there's a free alternative, though it's an undeservedly little-known one. The PC-only package Project Dogwaffle (**www.squirreldome.com**) was first developed by programmer Dan Ritchie seven years ago, when he couldn't find the sort of tools he needed on the PC, as he recalls. "In Project Dogwaffle Pro this is geared to creating images rather than writing them.

"It is an artist's tool that is, too," says Dan. "The interface is based on muscle memory instead of something that engineers ▶▶
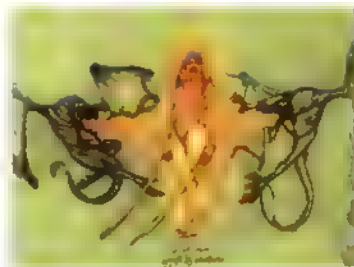
Martin Guerre of Cybersign is a prolific user of Project Dogwaffle. See www.cybersign.de

Continued from previous page…
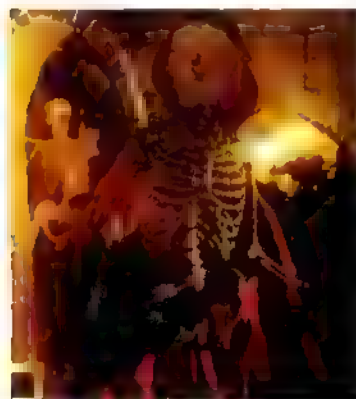
Gerardo [illegible] shows just what can be done with DAZ Studio and some imagination

We [illegible] The [illegible] are right [illegible] the [illegible] it easy to create [illegible] the [illegible]. There [illegible] the program.

While the app remains free, it's [illegible] commercial version, called PD Pro ($97), simply because Dan found he was working on it full time.

Being artists, we tend to think that most computer graphics software is too expensive so we try to keep our [illegible] at the [illegible].

Another type of free software is [illegible] www.gimp.org. This is a Photoshop-[illegible] for [illegible] features.

The [illegible] the program was [illegible] university project [illegible] enthusiastic [illegible] open source [illegible] the world. Because the [illegible] independent [illegible] Windows, Mac [illegible] GIMP [illegible].

There are many other free or [illegible] put you off. ●

An example of Digital Creature Painting, bringing to life a character made in Creature Design and Drawing.

Creature secrets

Artist training Hollywood veteran concept designer shares his wisdom on two new DVDs.

Hollywood concept artist Puddnhead has released a set of training DVDs through The Gnomon Workshop. Creature Design and Drawing Volume 1 demonstrates the creation of three different creatures from scratch using traditional media.

In Volume 2, Digital Creature Painting, Puddnhead shows how to transform a line drawing into a digital painting using Painter IX. Over three hours, every step is explained in depth, from creating a better [illegible] and [illegible] tools [illegible] painting better edges. Abstract topics are discussed such as adding [illegible] advanced lighting and knowing when a painting is finished.

Puddnhead has worked in the art, fantasy and [illegible] impressive list of films for the likes of Lucasfilm, Sony Pictures [illegible] games Electronic Arts and Wizards of the Coast. He's designed art for [illegible] RPG card games and video games.

The Techniques of Puddnhead [illegible] 1 and 2 cost $[illegible] and $59 respectively. **www.thegnomonworkshop.com**

This month
ImagineFX
likes...

Kyoung-Min Cho – a man with talent beyond belief!
www.black-eye.org

Gorillaz – great artwork, even better music
www.gorillaz.com

George Hull – In our eyes, the man who made The Matrix
www.ghull.com

Natalie Shau – unbelievable photo art from Lithuania's finest
www.photo.net/photos/NatalieShau

Painter's all-new brushes

New software More features and fixes in version 9.1.

Artist Robert Chang is happy with the additions in Painter 9.1

If you're an aficionado of Painter, you've most likely upgraded to version IX, but you may have missed the 9.1 update. Corel introduces some community-requested features along with bug fixes.

Top of the new features [illegible] support for dual monitors on Windows 2000 and XP. Performance is improved on Mac OS [illegible] Tiger. The art brush and [illegible] type have been enhanced and there's a bunch of new art pen brushes, among other goodies.

Painter
IX

ImagineFX contributor Robert Chang [illegible] uses Painter extensively [illegible]. The most significant improvement in 9.1 is [illegible] problem [illegible] working on your image [illegible] Painter and Photoshop. Now [illegible] together and [illegible] work.

You can download the update free at **www.corel.com/painterix/lp/91_update**. See our review [illegible] artwork from Dan M[illegible] on p102

Maid in Japan

Fantasy world Meet the modeller who combines his passion for fantasy art with his love of PCs

Fantasy art isn't restricted to pen and paper, or the digital medium. These life-sized sculptures – pictured below – were created by Katsuya Matsumura, founder member of the S.A.E, a fantasy model-making group in Japan.

His group generally make the kind of high weird and sorcery models that you might find in Dark Workshop. But Katsuya also specialises in making quite life-size fantasy sculptures out of polystyrene and using them to case working PCs.

Katsuya is more than happy to share his creative juices. First I try to imagine clearly how she looks when completed, then I craft the corner frame with basic parts and get to deal in my mind what is part of the perfect the PC he explains.

Once he's ready he starts sculpting the figure with polystyrene foam, which can take a few weeks. He's then ready to turn the sculpture to house using artists actual parts. So far he has made three life-size PC models. His first attempt was a human-size Transformer character. After that came fire, a blonde with a taste for weapons, who sports a bondage trouser ensemble top and a mean looking pistol.

The second is certainly in Katsuya's favourite Maya. She's a brunette warrior woman with a penchant for bikinis and rather large battle axe. His most recent creation, Kanu however is his first in a truly serious, Japanese ethnicity Kanu sculpted model wearing a red maid uniform is clearly a Manga inspired creation.

Find out more about Katsuya's crazy sculpted PCs at **www011. upp.so-net.ne.jp/kat**.

> 66 **Katsuya specialises in making life-size fantasy sculptures and using them to house working PCs** 99

Is it a robot? No, it's a PC! Although a little scary it beats a dull beige box...
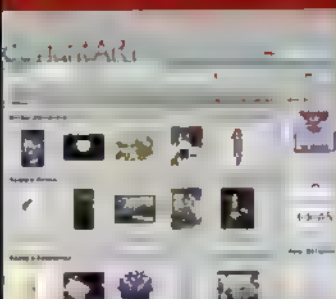
No.1 deviantART
URL: www.deviantart.com
deviantART is a thriving community site offering anyone the opportunity to upload and share their work with millions of others. Bookmark NOW!

No.2 CGSociety
URL: www.cgsociety...
With an astonishing amount of digital art frequently uploaded to its forums and a plethora of news and comment, this is an unmissable site.
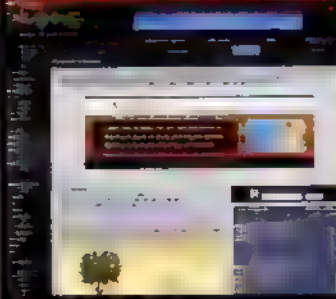
No.3 Epilogue
URL: www.epilogue.net
Recently adding a rather handy education section to the site, Epilogue continues to deliver superlative art galleries, news and tutorials.
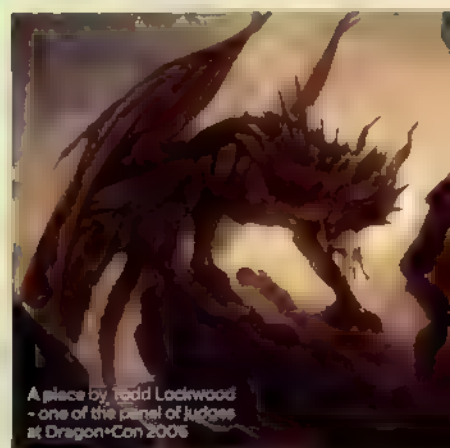
A piece by Todd Lockwood – one of the panel of judges at Dragon*Con 2006

Dragon*Con 2006 art show

The sci-fi and fantasy art show calls for entries

Dragon*Con, the USA's largest sci-fi and fantasy multimedia and art convention, has called for entries to its art show.

The convention which will take place in Atlanta, Georgia from 1-4 September 2006, will pull a global audience of sci-fi and fantasy art enthusiasts and professionals from around the globe. Curator Patrick Roberts told us "The Dragon*Con Art Show is the largest science fiction, fantasy, horror and surreal art show in the world. We have over 30,000 attendees that come to the art show, and top artists on our jury such as Todd Lockwood, Janny Wurts, and Don Maitz.

To find out more, contact Patrick on **ideamaker3@yahoo. com** or visit **www.artshow. dragoncon.net**
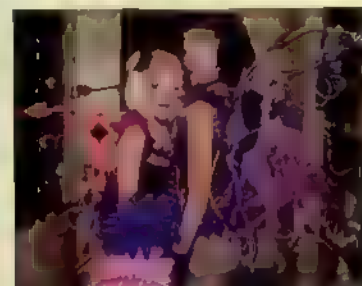
Dragon*Con pulls a global audience of sci-fi and fantasy art enthusiasts and professionals

WHAT IS FANTASY ART?

And what makes this genre important? We ask our brand new fantasy art columnist

By Todd Lockwood

Fantasy art does not merely consist of fairy pictures illustrating children's books. Fairy stories are the remnants of older belief systems, worth exploring in their own right. The best fantasy artists and writers understand the depths of psychology and spirituality within myths.

Frazetta, Froud, Lee, and Howe build upon a legacy replete with fantastic images, from the statue of Winged Victory by an unknown in ancient Greece to The Book of Kells; from sculpture and paintings by Rembrandt, Doré, Rodin, Waterhouse, Parrish and NC Wyeth, to the landscapes of Bierstadt and Church.

> So many act as if they have all the answers

Modern science and religion leave little room for exploration of the mystery that is life and the universe, since both seem focused on fundamental absolutes. When so many act as if they have all the answers, it's no wonder we are drawn to art and stories that knock on the door of the subconscious, that suggest possibilities wider and deeper than the mundane.

Fantasy art has never been about that which we see, but rather that which we strive to see. At its best it digs deeper, turning over the stones of our complacent world views to expose the creepy crawlies beneath. It aims higher, imagining the castles atop the stormclouds. It explores unimagined realms. It expands the boundaries into dimensions yet unmeasured. Fantasy art is purely about discovery.

"Do you agree or disagree with me? Write in and tell me by sending an email to todd@imaginefx.com

See more at www.toddlockwood.com

Showing off in style

New gallery ComplexArts aims to promote digital fantasy and sci-fi artists in the real world

ComplexArts isn't just another online gallery of fantasy art – it's a chance to buy original pieces printed on canvas from some of the best known and rising names in the field, such as Pär Olofsson.

When ComplexArts [illegible] discovered the work of Linda Bergkvist [illegible] study [illegible] mesmerised. To his dismay [illegible] he found there was [illegible] her prints. After further [illegible] he concluded that [illegible] fantasy art wasn't regarded as fine art [illegible] by the establishment.

[illegible] change this situation. [illegible] ImagineFX [illegible] Linda Bergkvist he set up ComplexArts [illegible] showcase [illegible] fantasy [illegible] artists [illegible] to sell their work [illegible] feel the artists shouldn't have to [illegible] either [illegible] marketing and financial matters [illegible] their time painting [illegible]

Each [illegible] water resistant [illegible]

[illegible] to [illegible]

However [illegible] traditional art [illegible] fantasy art [illegible] change.

With the [illegible] Martin Bland [illegible]

www.complexarts.com

[illegible]brium, by Henning Ludvigsen.

[illegible] by Martin Bland

[illegible] by John Wallin Liberto

Full English for Ghost in the Shell 2: the acclaimed anime sci-fi fable.

Anime round-up

DVD news March release for Miyazaki's masterpiece and a new take on Ghost in the Shell

With the release of Howl's Moving Castle on DVD and the arrival of an intelligently repackaged Ghost in the Shell 2 among the early treats, 2006 is shaping up to be a good year for anime collectors.

by the voiceover cast of the original movie for English speaking viewers. The Deluxe edition has extras such as a documentary directed by Jonathan Clements head of The Anime Encyclopedia.

Meanwhile Hayao Miyazaki has been busy this time with a series of fresh UK releases from Optimum and the long-awaited March release of his Moving Castle on DVD. Possibly of more interest - and due for the 27th March release date - is a special edition of Miyazaki's earlier classic, the story Princess Mononoke. A wild tale of Ress I see Duke thought Miss its are

www.optimumreleasing.com

World of Froud

Classic fantasy art Fairies ahoy – and the Dark Crystal 2 edges closer.

**Last year was a busy one for
fantasy artist Brian Froud, and he's
topped it off with a lavish new
book showcasing his private work
of the last 30 years.**

The Secret Sketchbooks
of Brian Froud contains
his personal selection
of drawings, ideas and
concepts for pictures
plus, of course, other
fairies and creatures. The book
promises to offer an unprecedented
insight into the mind of the artist
who produced Lady Cottington's
Pressed Fairy Book.

Brian also confirms he has
submitted his latest designs for The
Dark Crystal 2, subtitled The Power
of the Dark Crystal. This long-
awaited sequel to the classic 1982
film was announced by the Jim
Henson Company a year or so last year.

"No production start date or
release date has been set," he says.
"A new version of the script was
delivered just before Christmas."
Published by Imagnosis, The Secret
Sketchbooks costs $20 and is
available from Goblin Market.
www.goblinmarket.net/store.

Now released: Art from a lifetime of
believing in fairies

Fantasy talk Explaining the inexplicable

**"Fantasy art has never been about that which we see, but rather that
which we strive to see, and that which can be seen no other way."**
Todd Lockwood, digital artist, p22.

Making manga the modern way...

New software Celebrated Japanese package gets
a belated English release.

**The publisher of Poser, e-frontier,
has announced a forthcoming
English version of Manga
Studio 3.0. This comic art
and illustration app has been
available in Japan since
2001. The translated edition
arrives in two flavours, for
beginners and experienced
artists, called Debut and EX.**

Manga Studio EX promises the
same responsive touch as drawing
on paper with vector-mapping
technology, and its support for

tablets' was pressure sensing. Tone
data (for shading and the like) is
resolution-independent, so it
can be altered easily without
extensive redrawing.

The same applies to drawing
strokes, separating white areas
and black (well, you can't). It
promises some features that
are not possible with traditional
media. Both versions will be
available for PC and Mac. You can
check for price announcements at
www.e-frontier.com

ARTIST INSIGHT

I've been
looking to
buy proper
manga software
for the past few
months, and I
can't believe the
timing of the
release of Manga
Studio 3. I look
forward to testing
it out.
**– Joanna Zhou,
UK manga artist,
Sweatdrop
Studios**

Digital heroes

Comic art What's on the drawing board in 2006 – and introducing an exclusive new strip for ImagineFX

If you still think digital comic art is confined to the web or lo-fi e-zines, think again. This year will see ever more high-profile titles featuring work created with software and hardware.

Award-winning artist Frazer Irving, of 2000AD fame, has used digital production extensively since 2003. His latest project is Iron Man Inevitable for Marvel Comics. The six-issue mini series was written by Joe Casey and runs until May (issue 2 is out now). Meanwhile, a collected edition of Irving's Seven Soldiers, a collaboration with Grant Morrison, is to be released by DC Comics.

"Beyond that I'm working on a story with Simon Spurrier (of 2000AD fame) Frazer adds. "We may well publish it ourselves, as the product may be a little too experimental for most major publishing houses – plus it's a western"

Frazer and Simon will also be contributing an exclusive new comic series to ImagineFX, each issue: The Meddlesome Muse. In the strip, a fictional comic artist writer (perhaps not a million miles away from Irving or Spurrier) is bedevilled by his mind's own Muse.

She has suddenly decided to make contact, through the artwork explains Simon. "She's bolshy flirtatious and desperate to hog the limelight popping-up from behind the scenery of whatever strip our unfortunate creator has been working on" You can read the first episode of The Meddlesome Muse on p114

Newcomer Jamie McKelvie's work tends to deal with gritty reality rather than fantasy. His first full length graphic novel Long Hot Summer, is a good example. It's a romance but the kind of romance that doesn't have a happy ending," he explains. Written by Eric Stephenson, it's available from Image Comics. Following that is Suburban Glamour a 150-page modern fantasy graphic novel written and drawn by Jamie which should be available soon. We'll have more details nearer the release

The Meddlesome Muse in one of her many incarnations. See p114 for the first episode

Cover from issue 2 of Iron Man. Inevitable illustrated by Frazer Irving and published by Marvel Comics
© Copyright Marvel Enterprises 2006

A teaser image for Laura, one of the main characters in Jamie McKelvie's Suburban Glamour

The origin of Iron Man
Conceived by Stan Lee, Jack Kirby and Don Heck, and making his first appearance way back in 1963, Iron Man is the tale of Tony Stark, an industrialist billionaire captured by a Vietnamese warlord. After secretly building a suit of powered armour, escaping and making it back to America, Stark assumes a dual identity as the superhero Iron Man. More at www.marvel.com

Events

FANTASY & SCI-FI ART SHOWS AROUND THE WORLD

▆ FARPOINT, USA
EVENT NAME: Farpoint
DATE: 17-19 February 2006
URL: www.farpointcon.com
Chock-full of sci-fi goodness in games, films, TV and of course art. Featuring guests such as Penny Johnson Jerald and Harve Bennett. $50 for the full weekend; runs at the Baltimore Marriott Hunt Valley Inn, Maryland. Call +1 410 665 7000.

▆ SHEVACON, USA
EVENT NAME: ShevaCon
DATE: 24-26 February 2006
URL: www.shevacon.org
The Shenandoah Valley Convention reveals sci-fi, fantasy and gaming for artists and writers, complete with workshops and an art show. Special guest: Joe Devito. Takes place at the Roanoke Tanglewood hotel in Virginia. Call +1 540 774 4400.

▆ MIDSOUTHCON, USA
EVENT NAME: MidSouthCon
DATE: 24-26 March 2006
URL: www.midsouthcon.org
The whole gamut covered here: sci-fi, fantasy, horror, and gaming, with strong support for charity groups. As usual the art show will be in full force. Make your way to the Holiday Inn Selectin Memphis, but call +1 901 332 1130.

▆ LUNACON, USA
EVENT NAME: Lunacon
DATE: 17-19 March 2006
URL: www.lunacon.org
Hosted at the Hilton Hasbrouck Heights Hotel in New Jersey, filk, LARP and other impenetrable activities loom large at this sci-fi/fantasy bash. Check out David B. Mattingley as part of the art show – and bring a fat wallet.

▆ COLLECTORMANIA, UK
EVENT NAME: Collectormania
DATE: 11-12 February 2006
URL: www.collectormaniagmex.co.uk
As the name implies, this is mainly an event for collecting autographs and photos, though there's bound to be some original art available too. It takes place at the G-Mex Central Hall in Manchester, with tickets starting at £5. Recorded info on +44 (0) 1908 671130.

IF YOU KNOW OF ANY FORTHCOMING EVENTS AND YOU THINK THEY SHOULD BE FEATURED HERE, PLEASE SEND US THE DETAILS. EMAIL THEM TO THE EDITOR AT: ROB@IMAGINEFX.COM

SAKURA-CON, SEATTLE, USA
EVENT NAME: Sakura-Con
DATE: 24-26 March 2006
URL: www.sakuracon.org
Taking place at the Washington State Convention & Trade Center in Seattle. Devoted to East Asian culture, with a focus on anime, manga and video gaming. Expect dancing, karaoke and a whole lot of dressing up.
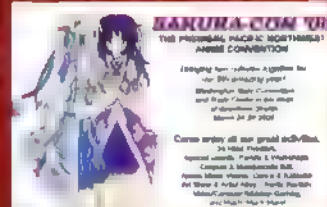
STELLARCON, NORTH CAROLINA, USA
EVENT NAME: Stellarcon
DATE: 17-19 February 2006
URL: www.uncg.edu/student groups/sf3/stellarcon.htm
The 30th event in this prestigious sci-fi convention features a thriving art show, dealer room and special guests Richard Hatch and Ray Mimura. It all happens at the Downtown Radisson Hotel in High Point, North Carolina. Call +1 336 889 888 to book.

SCI-FI BALL, DORSET, UK

EVENT NAME: Sci-fi Ball
DATE: 10-12 February 2006
URL: www.sfball.com

🇬🇧 Though primarily a social event, the 12th annual Sci-Fi Ball also features art and fiction competitions, and hopefully a special guest. Carrington House Hotel, Dorset (+44 01202 369 988). Day tickets from £50.

TOYKO INTERNATIONAL ANIME FAIR, TOYKO, JAPAN

EVENT NAME: Tokyo International Anime Fair
DATE: 23-26 March 2006
URL: www.taf.metro.tokyo.jp/en/index.html

🇯🇵 Exhibitors, competitions, new and established works, screenings and a whole load more at the most prestigious anime festival in the world. If you happen to be passing, make your way to Toky Big Sight.

SWANCON, NORTHBRIDGE, AUSTRALIA

EVENT NAME: Swancon
DATE: 3-6 March 2006
URL: www.swancon.com

Fantasy and sci-fi convention. Although the emphasis isn't on art, there's a thriving merchandise section with plenty of artwork and books on sale. Held at the Acacia Hotel in Northbridge, WA. Call +61 (08) 932 80 000.

Last year I went to...

THE ARTIST AMIRA REVIEWS SHEVACON 2005

ShevaCon arose from the ashes of RovaCon, but as a smaller version. Open to everyone, the 2005 event focused on authors and fabulous artist guests. The panels and workshops were not overly crowded, except for when there were big name guests, then it was a case of everyone for themselves. The art show accepted mail-in art, too.

The show was one of the best I've seen, considering the size of the group, which had roughly 300-500 members; with smaller cons. The atmosphere was friendly and we soon got to know almost everyone. Guests were usually readily available for chats. There was an art track and writers' track, plus costuming workshops and lots of sit-down gaming going on through the days and evenings, with 24-hour gaming.

There was far too much to do. I sat down with the schedule and marked out everything I hoped to attend... making it to more than one or two items was difficult. For me, the most fun was chatting with friends I often meet only once or twice a year – I sometimes present fan-related 'alternative' workshops at these events, such as belly-dancing, massage therapy and life-model drawing.

ShevaCon also runs a successful Vampire LARP. Panels may have 5-8 people or a full room depending on the guests and topics. There's usually a decent computer room and one of the best con suites around, with good healthy food and junk snacks, too. ●

Sampling the delights of the dark side – or at least, the costume competition, at SheVaCon 2005

"Making it to more than one or two items was difficult. For me, the most fun was chatting with friends I often meet only once or twice a year." Amira, artist.

See more at www.shevacon.org

Artist Challenge

Create a piece of art based on the theme 'New Horizons' for a chance to gain global recognition…

Welcome to ImagineFX's first Artist Challenge. Over the next few issues we'll be setting you a number of themes to paint a picture around – in any medium, be it 2D or 3D. The only rule is it has to be digital.

The winning image will be selected by our Artist Panel (see page 36), the Editor of ImagineFX and Lennie Larsson from ComplexArts. The winning artist will receive five large prints (610x915mm) of their work, courtesy of ComplexArts. They will also be featured in a two-page profile in a future issue of ImagineFX and win a commission worth over £700. For full ImagineFX competition rules see page 44.

The theme

We thought a fitting theme for this first issue was 'New Horizons'. It's your job to interpret this in any way you see fit. Please keep images free from gratuitous nudity (we want to publish the winners!) and be non-offensive. Take a look through the pages of this magazine for inspiration, then get painting. The closing date is **26 April 2006**.

The image

The winning image will need to comply to the specs below in order to be printed at a large size by ComplexArts.

Image specs:
610x915mm
300DPI
TIFF or JPEG format

Artwork by Menelt Jongsuvwadi

Artwork by Sergei Kostick

Artwork by Sergei K...
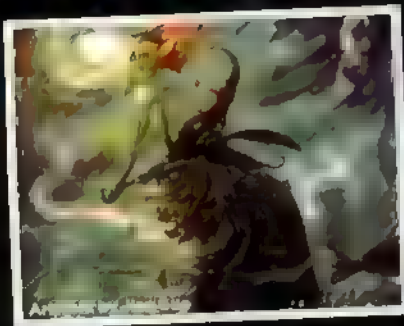
HOW TO SUBMIT YOUR IMAGE

Due to the high file sizes involved, we cannot receive entries via email. To enter your image into the challenge, fill out the form below and post it along with a CD or DVD containing your image to:

ImagineFX Reader Challenge 001,
Future Publishing Ltd, 30 Monmouth Street,
Bath, BA1 2BW.

Above A selection of images from this issue. Think you can do better? Enter our Artist Challenge and gain global recognition and a raft of other prizes.

I would like to submit my image to the ImagineFX Reader Challenge.

Name.

Address:

Postcode:

Email address:

Telephone:

Please include this form with your image (or a photocopy).   Code RC001

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UNITED STATES READERS PLEASE TURN TO PAGE 73

Artist Q&A

YOUR QUESTIONS ANSWERED BY OUR PANEL OF DIGITAL ART GURUS.

ADOBE PHOTOSHOP

This is the unsmoothed version of the image. Don't worry about streaky strokes at this stage
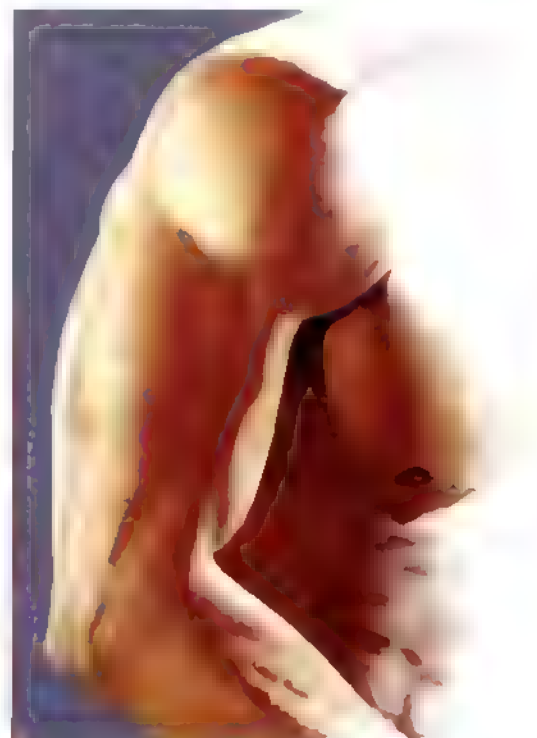
Smudging can cause a look that's too smooth. I've applied a User-Defined smudge brush with slight texture, but this is a matter of taste

Question
What is the best and easiest way to paint a smooth transition in Photoshop – like from shadow to light on smoothly curving surfaces? *Paul Andrews, UK, via email*

Answer
Steven Stahlberg replies

It's best to use a tablet and pressure-sensitive stylus although it's certainly possible, but much more tedious, to do it with a mouse.

There are different methods you could use: the Airbrush tool is one. But the following method is easier and more intuitive. It's basically two steps: laying down the paint with one brush, then smudging it.

First, lay down the colours transparently with a hard-edged brush on which the transparency is pressure-sensitive, in overlapping strokes. Try to get as close to the final look as you can with this brush, but don't worry if it looks streaky.

You get rid of any streaks in the next step, although sometimes you may not need to. Make sure that the size of the brush is optimised for the area you're working on (use the [ ] keys a lot).

Second, smudge the edges you want to get rid of (and only those) with a similar sized smudge brush also pressure sensitive. Be gentle and careful, applying the smudge in short strokes, back and forth, mostly at right angles to the initial brush strokes. Occasionally you can try one long zig-zag stroke, if you like.

The result can be smoothed by running a few strokes lengthwise, at right angles to your other smudge strokes. Be careful not to smudge anything that should remain sharp. If you do this correctly, the image should start to look more and more like an oil painting.

Step-by-step: Applying and smudging colours.
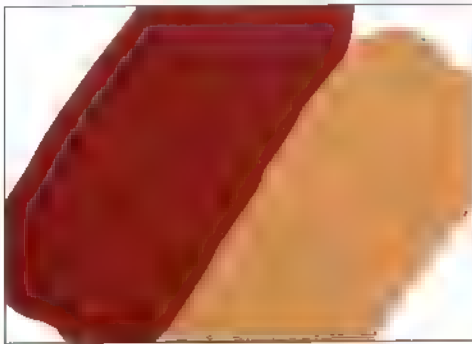
1 Begin by blocking two or three suitable colours and adjust the transparency, press the selective tool.
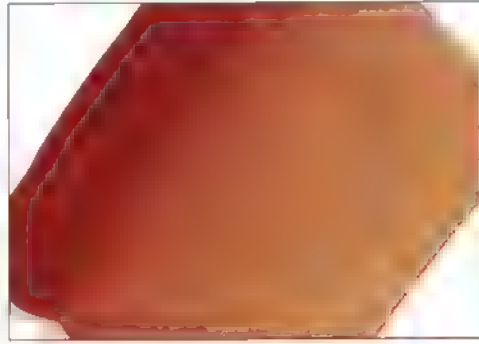
2 Merge the colours with overlapping strokes, use more less transparent and simple colours from earlier strokes (press Alt while pushing the stylus down)
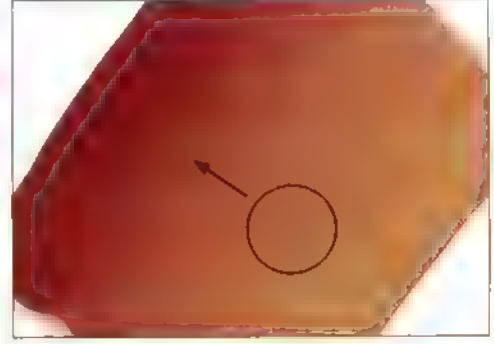
3 Smudge selected parts of these strokes at 40 level. The individual should individually smooth result. The first one should be fine to use at first

---

Question

When I create a new file in my Painting program I am asked to define the size and DPI settings. What are the correct DPI settings to use and how do they impact on the size of my image? *Ian Moon, UK, via email*

ADOBE PHOTOSHOP

Answer
Don Seegmiller replies

There is often a lot of confusion about what are the correct DPI settings for an image. The simple answer is that it depends what your intentions are. DPI stands for "dots per inch" and it refers to the resolution that will be used by your printer when outputting the image.

DPI is important if you're going to print that image. Something between 200 and 300 DPI will give you good results on today's printers. You can go as low as 150 DPI and still get acceptable results in most cases.

So, what size should your image be? As an example, let's say that you want a 5x7-inch print of your digital painting. Assuming an optimal DPI resolution of 300, you would multiply each dimension of your 5x7-inch creation by 300 to give you an image of 1,500x2,100 pixels. Similarly, when a new image is

created and you are asked what the dimensions and DPI should be, you would enter 1,500 pixels wide, 1,200 pixels high, and 300 DPI.

While DPI is important to your printer, it is not important to your monitor. A 300 DPI image and a 72 DPI image that are both 1,500x1,200 pixels in size will display the same size on your monitor as you can see in the two figures. Monitors display in PPI or pixels per inch

Most monitors display a resolution that is about 72 PPI. The only way that an image will display either larger or smaller on your screen is if

If you're just painting for the monitor the DPI settings do not matter but size your image to the resolution of your monitor.

you change the actual screen resolution. In the examples shown here, you can see both 72 and 300 DPI images displayed on monitors that have a screen resolution of 640x480 pixels and 1,280x1,024 pixels, respectively. The images again appear the same size, increasing in size only when the actual screen resolution changes.

What this means is that if your monitor only displays 640x480, you should limit your image size to something close to that. If you don't, you will find that your viewer will have to scroll around or zoom out to see the whole image

To print an image set the DPI to about 300 then multiply this by the intended print size

Artist's secret

WHAT SIZE DO I START A DIGITAL PAINTING

When initiating a new

have

then a

Don Seegmiller, digital artist

Lattice/terrains can be repeated easily to create a large surface area
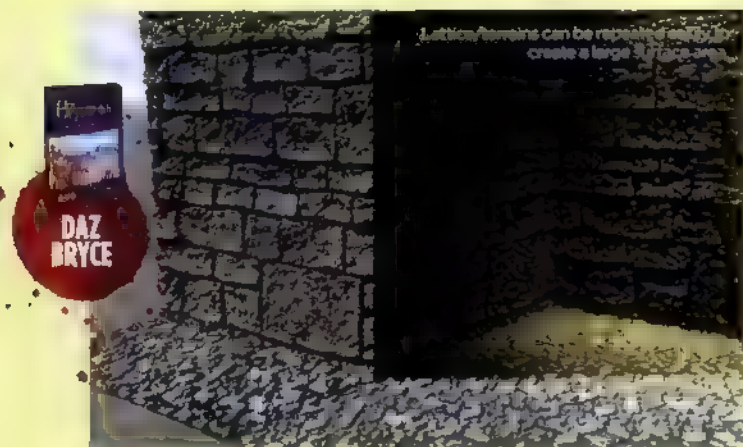
Question

I want to create a stone wall in Bryce, using photographic textures for realism. I have used a greyscale version of the texture in the bump channel to add surface detail, but I'd like more depth in the crevices.

Sam Wiltshire, New Zealand, via email

Answer

Adam Benton replies

There is a highly effective solution to this problem, using terrain or lattice objects. Bump mapping is useful for adding low level detailed surface texture to an object, but to get true deformations and surface distortions, visible on the object edges, you'd generally use displacement in other 3D apps.

In Bryce, there is no displacement option, but you do have the powerful Terrain Editor. Since this uses greyscale information to create depth and height, you can load your stone bump map into the Terrain or Lattice Editor to help create actual stone geometry.

This is not only effective once rendered, it is visible as a true mesh wireframe in the editor, which makes

scene setup and accurate object placement easier.

Start with a new Bryce document, and click on and create a lattice object. Click on the little [E] icon next to the lattice, which opens the Terrain Editor screen. In the Editing Tools window, select the Picture tab. Now click on Load in the first image box, and find your chosen greyscale stone texture. Copy and paste this into the second image box.

You now have a rather rough and exaggerated height map in the 3D Preview window. Switch to the Elevation tab, and click on the Raise/Lower and Smoothing buttons several times to lower the contrast and soften the details. Back in the main window, rotate the lattice 90° and flatten it until you get the desired results. Apply your base stone texture to the lattice to complete the illusion.

Tileable textures allow lattice/terrains to be duplicated seamlessly for huge walls and floors.

Question

One of the things that gives me trouble is painting wet drops or dew drops on things like rose petals or leaves. Are there any tips you can give me?

Wendy Hollis, UK, via email

Answer
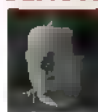
Don Seegmiller replies

Painting water drops is not that hard if you follow a few basic steps. To approach the subject using Photoshop, you just need to create a new layer to paint on. This makes it easier to make corrections without disturbing the background. On this new layer, make a relatively round selection using the Lasso tool. Feather the selection, by one or two pixels, so it's not hard edged.

Next, use a larger airbrush tool to fill in the selection with a colour that is slightly lighter than the background. Choose a colour that's a bit darker than the background and paint a dark edge completely around the selection. Decide which direction the main light source is coming from, then darken one side of the drop quite a lot using the same brush. Switch to a smaller, harder edged brush to paint in a bright highlight on the edge of this darker area.

The basic water drop is now complete, but to give it more realism
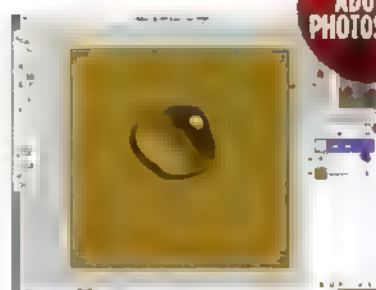
The process of painting water drops is similar in most digital programs

you can add a shadow. To do this duplicate the painted layer – this gives you two layers both with the painted water drop. Hide the top layer, load a selection on the bottom of the two layers, press the backspace key and clear the painted image. Feather the selection slightly, about five pixels, and fill with a colour that is similar to the background, but darker.

Unhide the top layer. The painted drop is now surrounded by a faint dark halo. Slightly offset the bottom layer to the opposite side of the drop from the highlight and the droplet is complete.

Question

I like to paint with my tablet on my computer, but how can I create the textures of real canvas in Photoshop without using filters? *Paul Christie, France, via email*

Answer

Frazer Irving replies

There are many ways that artists solve this problem. One of the ways I do it is to use a combination of brushes and layer properties. Basically, I always start with a 'ground' colour behind to give the paint something to work against (just like with real painting). This can be quite scruffy and should always be darker than the colour going on top.

The next step is to create a new layer above it and apply the Rough Round Bristle Brush with the Dual Brush turned off and the Opacity jitter set to Pen Pressure. Then I would paint an area of colour in where I need the background, set the layer to 'lock' and use the same brush again to paint on to that. This way the ground colour will show through to create the illusion of a natural working surface.

Question

Is there any way I can make my Poser model's eyes follow something in the scene without having to rotate and adjust each eyeball manually?

Gareth Johnston, Ireland, via email

Answer

Adam Benton replies

There is indeed a feature for this, called Point At, which can save a lot of time and manual posing effort. This tool also gives a more accurate representation of how eyes naturally focus on an object in front of them
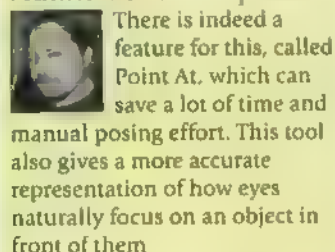
You can get your character's eyes to point at anything, such as a prop in their hands or another character's face. While this is fine for still images, for animation it might be more sensible to create a proxy object that you can then re-position and keyframe. This will give a more natural adjustment of the character's gaze throughout the scene; for example from one person to another, and then down to a watch.

Start with your character in a new document, and go to Props >Primitives Library. Double click on the Ball object, and reduce its scale down to about 25 per cent. Position the sphere roughly level with your figure's head and move it forward to about an arm's length. Select one of the figure's eyes and go to Object> Point At. In the following dialog, scroll down the list to the Ball, click on it and click OK. Repeat this for the second eye

E FRONTIER POSER

Move the proxy ball to where you want the eyes to look. Turn off visibility when rendering'

Artist's secret
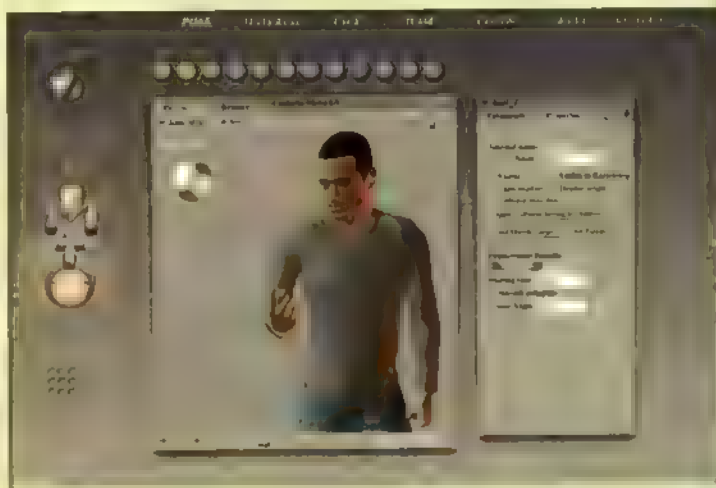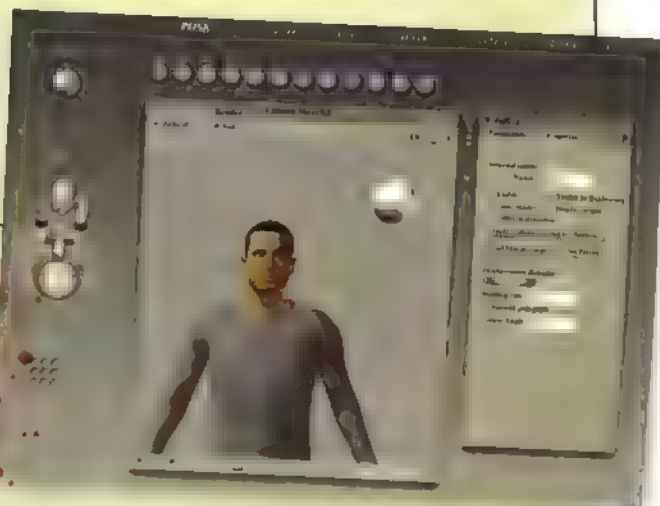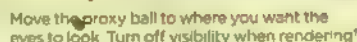
UV MAPS

Adam Benton,
Digital artist

Step-by-step: Using ground colours and locked layers

ADOBE PHOTOSHOP

1 [text obscured]

2 [text obscured]

3 [text obscured]

Question

I'm interested in creating illustrations to use as concept drawings for a film. How do you begin a digital illustration for conceptual film work? What are the basic steps?

Justin Hill, UK, via email

Answer

George Hull replies I almost always follow the same steps no matter what type of illustration I'm doing. For this question I've assume that there is no reference material to start with, and I'll show you how I would create original illustration from scratch.

1. Draw thumbnail sketches of rough ideas.
2. Develop the best idea into a better, larger drawing with more details
3. Scan the drawing and open it in Photoshop.
4. Make layers in Photoshop to paint below and above the drawing layer.
5. Set the layer property of the drawing layer to Multiply
6. The drawing now acts as a transparency, so you can see your sketch and paint freely.

I love to sit and draw a paper based on an idea so I start with a drawing. A percent of the time. Most of my work is as sometimes Techniques are used it is neural it comes based on decades of reference some conceptual these settings are used but at work on a paper first I'd create a new sign to paint in Photoshop.

For subject matter is so you have a no taste to improve it and of painting a about drawing and the final scene is some landscapes clouds and nature which we all more or less pose or so even. Painting is done on pos it starting gates However even a total landscapes I often start with a sketch. I think it is in my nature to start freely on paper as I feel less confined than when I use the computer. the sketch only needs to be 10 or 2 lines enough to try out the proportions items quickly. Consider these points

1. What is the subject matter?
2. What is the viewpoint – perhaps high looking down or low looking up?
3. Where is the horizon and vanishing point?
4. What is the best composition to highlight the idea?

I ask myself what is the most strong sensation for composition after the first draw this I'm ready so I'm ready drawing. You can paint to do these steps in Photoshop. I just like to start on paper
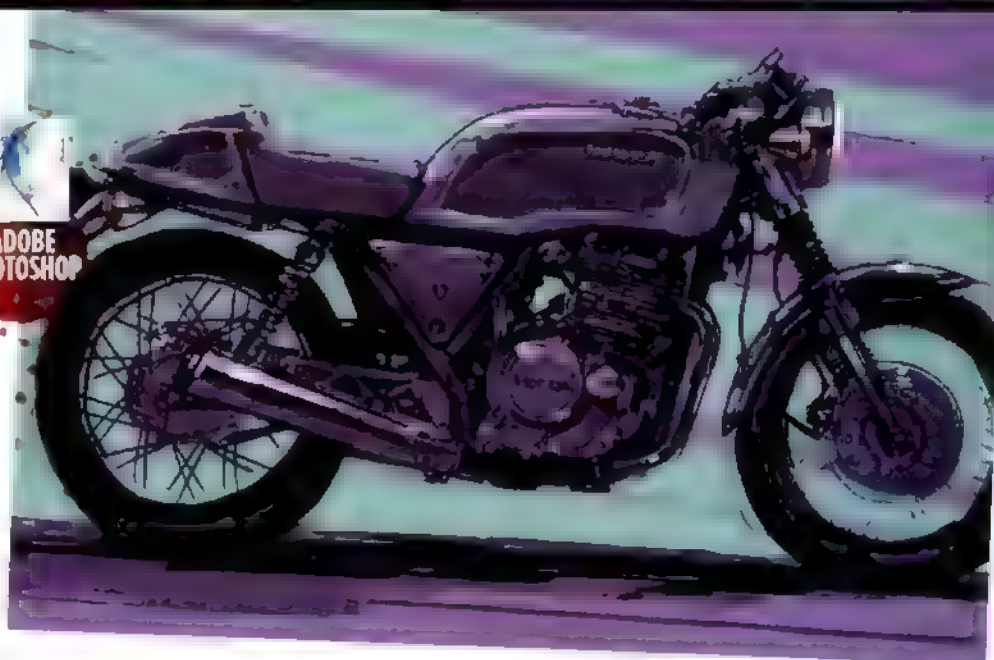
Step-by-step: Working on your sketch in Photoshop
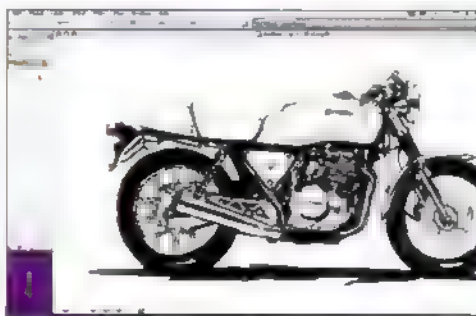
1 Scan your drawing into Photoshop so you can see it on your screen when you want to paint you could also draw your own art style. This creates an image and make a drawing that you're ready to use.

2 Create a new layer. Now the drawing that over with a new colour it doesn't matter what colour for of it. You can you paint to see the drawing because of the drawing layer as you have it off.

3 Change the layer property of the drawing layer to the form to Multiply. This will instantly copy the paper colour that lets you see the drawing as you paint. The transparent to create to sketch over and a real paper with a sketch paper.

4 You can now paint and paint to start as as of a colour stored when you now apply it, you want it which depends on the way of what you want. As you see that the field is freely over the paint now is from a painting.

Impose a grid in a separate layer on to a reference picture. Then transfer this to a blank canvas to help with proportions

ADOBE PHOTOSHOP

Question

I tend to have problems getting proportions right when I'm drawing people. What can I do to improve this? *Jane Hardy, UK, via email*

Answer
Henning Ludvigsen replies

Freehand drawing of the body requires an intimate knowledge of human anatomy. And even if you have the insight and the talent, it still takes a lot of time to master. You need lots of time to practise to achieve this. If you want more immediate results I would suggest you consider alternatives.

As a big fan of realistic-looking art, I believe in using photo references. If you have a digital camera, you could try taking pictures of yourself or friends in the pose you want your character to have. Another idea is to source free stock photos of something suitable.

The old trick of using a grid on top of the reference picture works just as well in digital art as it did in traditional art. I usually impose a grid, in a separate layer, on top of my reference picture, then copy the grid on to a blank canvas.

Next, I place the reference picture and the blank canvas next to each other. At this point, I try to partially forget what I'm making and I just draw square by square. I focus on the shapes I see in each element and draw them on a layer placed underneath the grid on the blank canvas.

Many digital artists choose to trace photos directly. Using the grid is a good way to get the proportions correct while still using the traditional technique. Also, flipping the picture horizontally every now and then is an old trick that reveals errors that your left or right-handed brain has missed.

To fix errors, you can use Filter>Liquify in Photoshop to softly move things into place. I find that horizontal flipping and the Liquify filter make a good combination.

Flipping the image and using the Liquify tool in Photoshop is a good way to correct errors. Gently push shapes into place
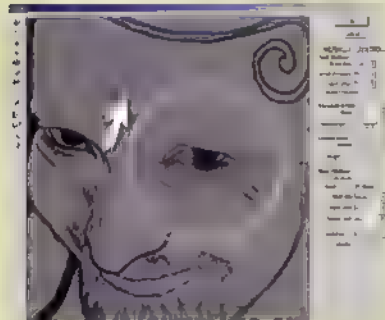
Question
I'm trying to draw fire in my comic strips, but it always looks too cartoony. Have you got any tips? *Tim Frances, Australia, via email*

Answer
Frazer Irving replies

I've used a simple two-tone combination of the Brush and Dodge tools. In the first image, I've laid down the basic colours for the fire, yellow where it's hottest, fading to red in the background. The ground colour is important because it can bleed through. I created a new layer above this set to colour burn, and used a textured brush tool to paint dark streaks radiating away from the fire.

I set the brush dynamics and size to respond to pressure on the Wacom tablet, to give the streaks some variation. Once I'd painted enough...

Paint different coloured streaks with varying brush pressures for a more realistic look

ADOBE PHOTOSHOP

Question

How do I get the most out of layers when colouring manga digitally? Is there a certain technique that artists use? *Clare Danby, UK, via email*

Answer

Joanna Zhou replies

Personally I stick to pure Photoshop, separate layers. Layers are necessary to maintain a feeling of control that allows images. When colouring it's most vital to keep distinct areas such as skin, eyes and hair on separate layers. I keep them on layers to make it easier to edit or separate your colour artwork.

Another feature most manga artists use is to fill in areas with a base colour, then to add on the darker shading, you apply it on a separate layer so the colour goes outside the outlines. This is quicker than constantly adjusting brush sizes and it ensures the right shade gets into small areas or spaces. Once everything looks correct, the excess that's only gets erased.

The Magic Wand tool can be used to keep your work coloured, but the incoming areas are a complicating when trying to colour something. Another advantage to keeping separate coloured layers means is being able to edit certain areas to enhance the visual

Try out layer attributes, erasers and tools such as Hue, Saturation to enhance your character.

image of the entire image to Saturation in Photoshop is useful as a smoother, permanent transformer that it applies, dissolves various tools so I have to what the tools are edited. You can create overlapping colouring patterns by pasting, pasting designs onto a new layer, then use the Magic Wand. Select Inverse and Delete to crop them to the right size.

The beauty of digital work is that you can forget everything is attached in so no danger of colouring inside the lines and in case you make a mistake, work effecting layers and erasers.

> ## 66 Create eye-catching clothing patterns by pasting designs on a new layer and using the Magic Wand 99

Question

I am creating my own manga and want to know more about digital screentoning. What programs do you recommend for this? *Nat Filip, Belgium, via email*

Answer

Joanna Zhou replies

Traditionally, screentone has been foil printed with tiny black dots to emulate greys, gradations or patterns. It's a trademark of manga style and is also used to create shading on comic pages. Lately digital screentoning has gained popularity, especially with western manga artists because it is cheap, clean and infinitely re-usable.

You can create many tone patterns using Photoshop alone. For a simply grey tone you have to convert a greyscale image into bitmap with the Halftone Screen option. Other designs such as sand, speed lines, stipples and scratches can be made using various filters.

There are also special programs designed for screentoning. For example Comicworks, by Deleter, is a well known one. For about $100 it offers you a massive variety of tones, such as

backgrounds, sky and landscapes; all things which could otherwise prove extremely difficult to create from scratch.

Computones is a more affordable program. It essentially comes free with every How to Draw Manga: Computones book (£15, from comic shops or Amazon). This plug-in for Photoshop and Paint Shop Pro has a selection of tones and a user-friendly interface.

If you are serious about pursuing a professional manga-drawing career, it is worthwhile investing in special screentoning software. Although Photoshop is fantastically versatile, it obviously hasn't been created just for screentoning, so it lacks many designs and motifs that are specific to the manga genre.

A final option which some artists choose is to buy real screentone, scan it at a high resolution, and simply re-use that for their comics.
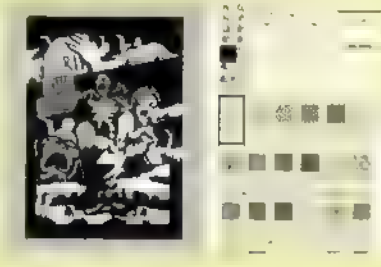
Weigh up how serious you are about manga art before choosing how to invest in screentoning

Question

I never seem to get the skin colours right when I'm painting people. Somehow it gets too monochrome or too cartoon-like. Any tips on how to make skin tones more lifelike? *Danni Carozza, Italy, via email*

Answer
Henning Ludvigsen replies
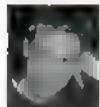
When painting skin tones, I believe it's important to mix a wide range of colours. To make skin to look more realistic I generally avoid the monochrome colours.

A good place to start is to look at all the different skin tone variations on you, even a body because places the skin might be looked a purple-like for instance the knuckles, the cheeks, the elbows or the forehead. In other places, where the skin is thin, it assumes the colour of things under it which is why veins look blue or purple, while wrists are pale and have a green or dull blue hue. So to avoid the indoor green when painting skin, to some extent you should try to forget the colour you think skin has.

My suggestion would be to start off with a base colour that is fairly close to skin in hue. Monochrome is fine for this. The next step should then be to find a base colour palette. I make a four to six step palette ranging from the brightest skin tones to the darkest with one for shadows in ambient light.

Figure out which colours you want to use, on the light sources and the ambient light in your scene. For instance, painting a person standing outside under a clear, blue sky demands a blue-tinted ambient light for the shadowed areas.

Equipped with a good palette and want to use the brush while switching regularly between the Colour, Multiply and Normal modes, you can mix the skin colours you need as your painting progresses.

Try to forget about what colour you think skin is. Set up a colour palette including shades for ambient light and shadows

Step-by-step: Paint skin tones on a base palette, then blend and add noise.
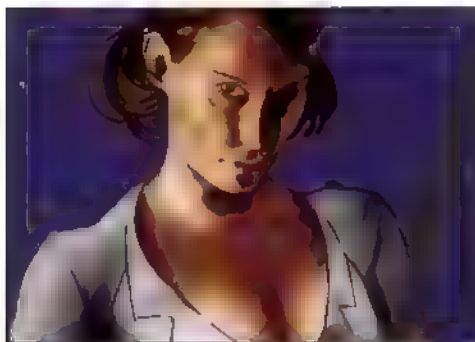
1 Start by painting in greys, and prefer to work over shape in the earliest stages. After a detail in greyscale version apply the entire character into one base colour. Here the base colour is red with purple in the darker parts
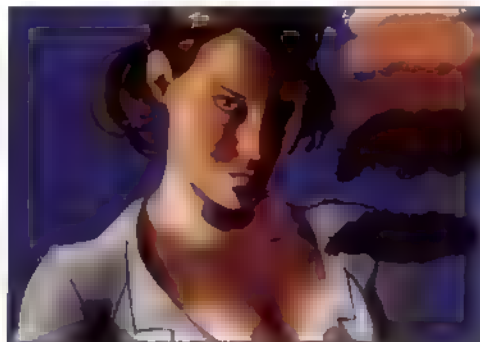
2 Skin tones tend to be a bit darker than you think. Take a closer look to your three to four steps down to a darker brown colour with a hint of purple and use soft favourite soft brush set to Normal and per cent and Colour mode. Softly begin painting
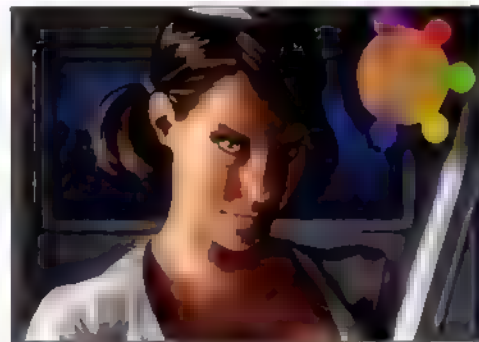
3 Use the brush on Normal mode and low flow then colour pick the areas you want to paint. To blend the colours colour pick them and try them on directly. Add overlay noise on top of the picture to make it look less computer painted

The ImagineFX £2,165 digital art giveaway

FANTASY & SCI-FI DIGITAL ART

To celebrate the first issue of ImagineFX, we're offering you the chance to win some amazing digital art prizes…

Welcome to ImagineFX. We hope by now you've had a good chance to flick through the magazine and experience some of the awesome artwork on show.

And to celebrate our first issue, we've teamed up with software companies, publishers and digital art training organisations around the globe to bring you the chance of winning some incredible prizes.

You could be walking away with a copy of Corel Painter, or if you're lucky, find a Gnomon workshop training DVD winging its way to you. There's a chance you could get your hands on Titan's amazing Mythology book or snap up a 3D bundle from Eovia. Or maybe you'll win a copy of the great PD Pro? As they say, you've gotta be in it to win it!

Competition sponsors:
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Digital art software
FOUR COPIES OF PAINTER IX

Get your hands on the ultimate digital painting tool. We've got four copies up for grabs…

If you haven't yet got your hands on Corel Painter, the amazing natural media tool, now's your chance.

The latest version is better than ever with new brushes, better workflow and much more speed. It's an essential addition to your arsenal. To be in with a chance of winning one of four copies, answer this question. **Who painted the image in the screenshot to the right (for a clue see page 102)?**

a) Dermot Milham b) Dan Milligan or c) Don Milsham. To enter, send your answer to **compo@imaginefx.com** with **Painter IX** in the subject line. Include your name and address. The closing date is 26 April 2006.
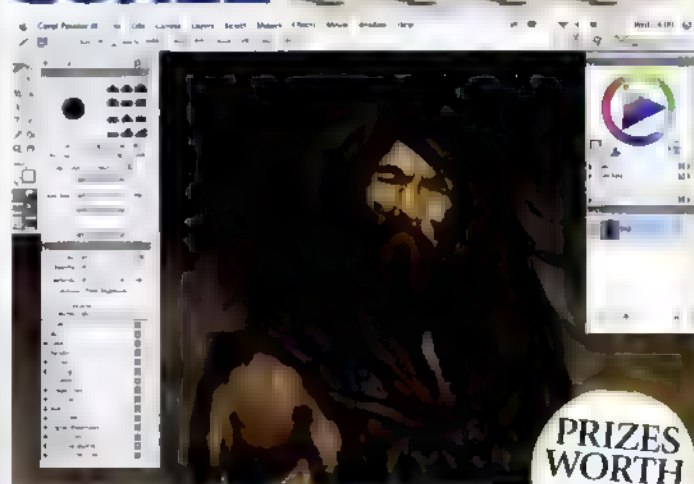
Painter IX is better than ever with more brushes and more speed.

PRIZES WORTH £1,160

Artist training

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Pro training DVDs to be won!

If your skills are a little rusty there's no better training than the DVDs from The Gnomon Workshop. We've got five up for grabs, all from industry leading artists. Just answer:

Which artist has just released new Gnomon training DVDs (see page 24 for a clue)?
a) Puddnhead b) Chodnhead or c) Cakenhead

To enter, send your answer to **compo@imaginefx.com** with the subject **Gnomon**, including your name and address. The closing date is 26 April 2006

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Learn art skills from the best with Gnomon.

THE GNOMON WORKSHOP

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3D ART BUNDLE FROM EOVIA

Win an entire 3D modelling suite!

Are you looking to get into 3D art? Well, here's your chance to do just that with no expense. We have a superb Eovia 3D bundle up for grabs. To be in with a chance, answer this:

What's the latest version of Eovia's Carrara (see page 30 for a clue)?
a) Carrara 1 b) Carrara 2 or c) Carrara 5

To enter, send your answer to **compo@imaginefx.com** with the subject **Eovia**, including your name and address. The closing date is 26 April 2006

BUNDLE WORTH £395!

eovia

Comic art

10 COPIES OF MYTHOLOGY

The awesome DC Comics art of Alex Ross…

TITAN BOOKS

Get your hands on a copy of Titan's amazing book Mythology: The DC Comics art of Alex Ross for nothing. To be in with a chance, answer this:

Which of these is a famous DC Comics character?
a) Superman b) Batman or c) Both of these

To enter this competition simply send your answer to **compo@imaginefx.com** with the subject **Mythology**, including your name and address. The closing date is 26 April 2006

WORTH OVER £160!

The incredible artwork of Alex Ross

Painting software

FIVE COPIES OF PD PRO 3.5

Win this amazing digital painting software…

Project Dogwaffle is a great tool for digital artists wanting the freedom of traditional mediums. To be in with a chance of winning one of five copies, answer the following:

Which artist and animator invented Project: Dogwaffle (for a clue see page 23)
a) Dan Ritzy b) Dan Ritchie or c) Dan Poorie

To enter, send your answer to **compo@imaginefx.com** with the subject **PD Pro**, including your name and address. The closing date is 26 April 2006

PD Pro is an amazing tool for digital artists

FastTrak**Software**Publishing

PRIZES WORTH £300

Natalie Shau

ImagineFX meets the young digital artist behind this beautiful and haunting imagery…

Natalie Shau has natural talent. In abundance. The 21-year-old Lithuanian has had no formal art training, but she's always been artistic: "Mostly I made works with watercolours and gouache, but almost all my school writing books were filled with sketches and drawings," she recalls.

Shau's also a self-taught digital artist, which makes the stunning compositions shown here remarkable: "The real art-making began when I bought my first digital camera in 2004," she says. "Skills in photo manipulating I've gained quite fast." She certainly has.

Her style ranges from digital photographic collages to traditional watercolour paintings, and sometimes other techniques. She works intuitively and finds it difficult to explain how a piece comes together; lacking the academic discourse to confidently describe her techniques: "With the lack of pedagogical skills, it becomes extremely difficult to explain HOW I do this or that!"

What she can tell us is that her main tools are Photoshop and a graphics tablet and her creative processes include: photo editing, cutouts, airbrushing, colour editing, mixing of textures, digital correction of scanned traditional art work. But not necessarily in that order. "Everything I create is from my imagination," Shau adds. "Sometimes my visions are quite surreal. Maybe that's why I prefer digital drawing, collages to photographic pieces. It's quite hard to convey what I want to portray with photography."

Her work is haunting and dreamlike; ghostly figures emerge from seas of blues, blacks and sepia tones, enticing the viewer with their porcelain-white faces, piercing eyes or blood red lips. "Colour is important," she muses "Luckily, by the will of someone from above, I have quite a good sense of colouristics."

She cites Gustav Klimt and Francis Bacon as two of her favourite modern artists. Her subjects, almost exclusively female, have the vampishness and beauty of Klimt's femme fatales, and sometimes the distortions seen in Bacon's portraits. Giger's influence is also evident in her more surreal collages. She gets vibes from music, too: "Deathrock mostly – very emotional, grotesque and theatrical styles, bands like Christian Death, Cinema Strange, Sleeping Children, Bloody Dead and Sexy." Browsing through her substantial catalogue of work at deviantART (under the pseudonym BlueBlack) and www.photo.net/photos/NatalieShau, these could be the titles of some of her own dramatic creations.

So what's her work about? "About me, others, the world, emotions, colours. About fragility, sensitivity, irony… Various dark folk and neoclassical music fills some emotional niches too… and legends, myths and fairytales from my childhood."

She's done artwork for bands such as The Duskfall, Morning and Ojos de Brujo, and caught the attention of music labels including Nuclear Blast and Black Lotus Rec. But not all of the recognition this has brought has been welcome. "There are people on the internet pretending to be me," she reveals. "Taking my name, and submitting my ripped artwork with comments of their own."

Despite this, the future looks positive. Having dropped out of business school in Lithuania because "it totally sucks," she's heading for England. "I'm preparing for more serious studies at art university. Hope I find a good one."

ICE QUEEN
*Digital techniques were used to create this work,
influenced by Natalie's favourite fairytale, The
Snow Queen. The work is beautiful, yet chilling.*

SCYTHE WOLF

The lonely Lulu runs around with a great scythe and a pack of wolves, but she keeps her powers about. Feel you to break... A communication of Robert Chang's painting attention to detail.

The art of
ROBERT CHANG

"I have big dreams and lofty goals. Whatever I've done pales in comparison to what I'm trying to accomplish." We meet our first ever 'Master of Art.'

The anime, Macross: Do You Remember Love? was the catalyst for the creative awakening of 13-year-old Robert Chang. "I fell head over heels in love with that film," he recalls. "I was so taken by the sheer imagination behind the designs, the story, the mood, the music..." The man's fascination with every aspect of creativity lasts to this day: "I knew after watching that film that I wanted to be a storyteller who combined art, story, music and movement into one cohesive piece of work." The logical solution was animation.

"Since then, I've been doing art, music, writing, photography and film making." It seems he won't be happy until he has mastered every art form going, then made up a few and mastered those. At 32 he's already an accomplished comic book artist, photographer, director and painter.

ENCHANTED

Straight from high school Robert became a comic book artist. Initially taking freelance contracts for artwork, after four years of graft he got the green light from Sirius Entertainment for Enchanted. Robert created, wrote and illustrated this dark gothic/fantasy epic. He takes the shine off this a little though: "The money was shit, but I was at least telling my own stories."

For eight long years, times were tough. "Comic books were hard. Unless you were a superstar, you couldn't make a living," explains Robert. And whether you make a living or a pittance: "It still takes up all of your time." Working out other people's dreams didn't go down well, either: "I didn't enjoy drawing other people's stories because I never intended to be an artist for hire."

The Enchanted years led to a stint in the games industry, initially on Prince of Persia 3D. Video games were on the whole an unsatisfactory experience for the young artist, but this was an important period of creative development. Writing became more of a focus, as did film.

MOVING AROUND

At the end of 2001, he went to see his mother in China, intending a short visit. But then he met and married Elena, and found the emotional support he wanted: "Elena's the most loving, nurturing and compassionate person I've ever met. She supports me 110 per cent," he enthuses. There are slightly perverse consequences to this: "I sometimes worry that if I never become successful at any of the creative endeavours I do, I'll let her down."

A couple of years into this Chinese sabbatical, Alias' Maya was becoming second nature and the online CG
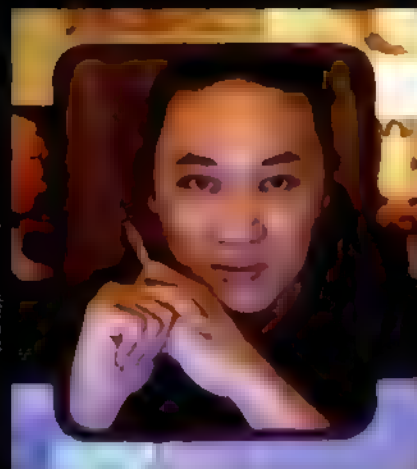
ROBERT CHANG
Above, Robert is determined to master every creative avenue. Below, his wife, Elena has given him artistic inspiration; his appreciation shines out in the work quality.

The art of Robert Chang

ELENA
This digital portrait of Robert's wife was not produced from photo references. He says that painting a life portrait digitally was easier than doing it traditionally

ORDINARY HEROES
A reflection of Robert's days of D&D. A motley posse of fantastic characters, posing before going underground.
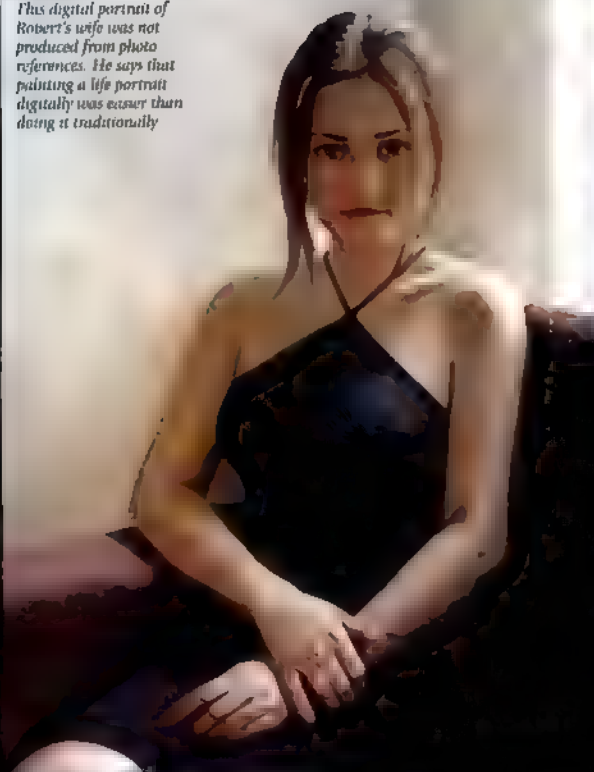
PROJECT FOCUS
The promise of a Promise yet to be fulfilled...

"Promise began as a story I wrote as a one-shot graphic novel," says Robert. It looked like it might be in the frame back in 1997, with Sirius Entertainment, publishers of his Enchanted comic books. But the plan dissolved when Robert left comics for a stint in computer games. Hope came in 2001, when Promise returned in short story form. Then in 2002, he decided to rewrite it as an animated short film.

The short story and the short film versions are radically different: "The story is more realistic, only hinting at the fantastic elements. The film is full-blown fantasy."

What's Promise about? "A modern fairytale about love, faith and sacrifice. And how much would you sacrifice to fulfill a promise?"

When production failed to materialise at Optidigit in '97, Robert packed his bags. Several other offers have been rejected, so when will we see Promise? "It's hard to say," Robert confesses. "Steven [Stahlberg; Optidigit] was the only one I trusted, but the funding fell through."

Still awaiting full production, Promise has been Robert's project for several years. The characters, concepts and storyboard are all in place.

community was turning out to be a second home. Then an offer came up which brought about another move. In an email chat with long-standing online buddy, Steven Stahlberg, the CG maverick and boss of Optidigit offered Robert a job, with Promise. This is the title of an animated short that the artist has been nurturing in various forms since 1997 (see left).

The position as director at Optidigit brought with it an added bonus – it meant that Promise would go into production.

There has always been a balance in Robert's artistic diet. Even as a teenager, he drew a lot of fine art portraits. He observes: "My fine art works were the ones that gained me recognition, and even now are more popular in online digital art galleries."

Robert's digital work has a purity to it, making it hard not to get right up close and examine every detail. "I have no problem drawing with a tablet at all," says the artist. "I just sketch digitally and go from there." The images that appear have a

> ## 66 I have no problem at all drawing with a tablet. I just sketch digitally and go from there 99

The couple moved to Malaysia and Robert upped a gear: "I was writing and drawing a lot of material for original intellectual property for the pitch packages on Promise, Scythe Wolf and Vagrant Star," he says. He was also directing and producing.

WORKING PROCESS
Robert is versatile: comic book artist and writer, screenwriter, 3D artist, director, photographer; the list goes on. His list of locations is pretty cool too: Taiwan, San Francisco, Kuala Lumpur and now Fuzhou, China. A native of Taiwan, Robert moved to the US aged 11. "I read a lot of 'Choose your own Adventure' books, Fighting Fantasy books, sci-fi/fantasy novels, and comic books," he remembers. "As a kid or teenager, these things were addictive because they provide escapism and a world of imagination."

very painterly quality, full of loving detail. Robert himself is hard to pin down when it comes to the question of style. "I'm not sure," he ponders. "I have different sides." Eventually he settles with, "Maybe sensual and introspective?".

Ever the perfectionist, though, he adds: "I tend to worry about whether I'm painting too clean." He's not a fan of this style, so popular with fantasy artists, and he wrestles with this tendency: "I have to consciously force myself to loosen up and not paint too clean," he admits. Sometimes he gives in to clean results, at other times he goes back and "messes up" the clean areas.

Possibly the most recognisable example of Robert's trademark clarity is the promotional poster for Promise. Created in Painter and Photoshop, this piece is a real gem for providing the most fully realised example of a window on the worlds that ▶▶

BLOOD SIREN

"Blood Sirens are cursed to be forever falling in love with and longing for men they can't have and can't get close to," explains Robert. The consequences are pretty messy. You can relive the gore via a tutorial on his website.
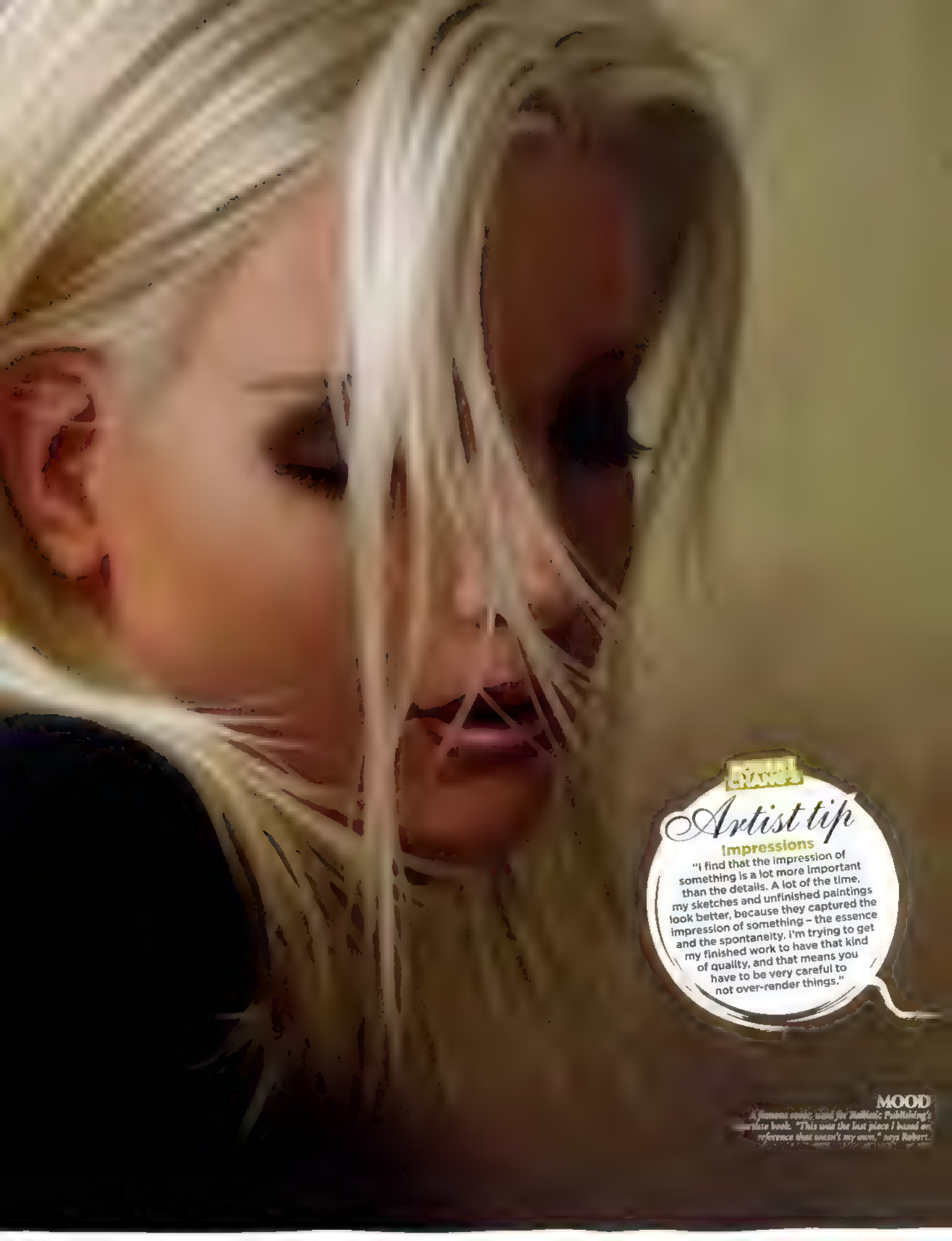
Artist tip

Impressions

"I find that the impression of something is a lot more important than the details. A lot of the time, my sketches and unfinished paintings look better, because they captured the impression of something – the essence and the spontaneity. I'm trying to get my finished work to have that kind of quality, and that means you have to be very careful to not over-render things."

MOOD
A famous cover, used for Ballistic Publishing's plate book. "This was the last piece I based on reference that wasn't my own," says Robert.

BLACK WOLF RONIN
"Doing everything out of your head can be painful, because you're never sure if you're painting things correctly," says Robert.

Robert Chang's
VITAL STATISTICS
And a bit of personal philosophy...

Place of birth
Taipei, Taiwan

Date of birth
December 31, 1972

Mother tongue?
Mandarin Chinese

Favourite colour
Black, but as I get older, my wardrobe and furnishing palette is expanding. Now I also like grey, white, beige, burgundy, silver – but it really depends on what it's for.

Favourite traditional artist
There's more than one: John Singer Sargent, JW Waterhouse, Gil Elvgren, Richard Schmid, Jeremy Lipking, Pino, Ian McCaig, Ronnie Del Carmen and a bunch of others.

Favourite digital artist
Craig Mullins, Justin Sweet and Xiaoye Chen.

Favourite place
Japan, but I've always wanted to see Europe, and I suspect I'll love it. San Francisco is damn cool too.

First memory
First day in kindergarten, making a necklace by cutting different coloured straws and stringing them together. But I'm not sure if that's really the earliest memory.

First love
For puppy love, it was first grade – my first girlfriend. She was pretty, popular, had good grades, and I was the bad boy who caused a lot of trouble.

Most prized possession
A Chinese novel entitled Journey. I lost that book once after lending it to a friend, and I ended up spending seven years looking for another copy. It was long out of print. It's a profound and moving book about the choices and sacrifices we make in life.

One thing you would like to do but would be too scared
Take the law into my own hands when dealing with total scumbags of the earth.

Single most important piece of professional advice
Guarantee your financial security first, indulge your passions second. It's no fun being a starving artist.

Single most important piece of life advice
Be a good person and make changes to yourself if you had done wrong. Pay attention to the world around you – you don't know everything and it would benefit you to remain open-minded.

Fate or self-determination: which do you believe in?
Both. I think some events are predetermined, while some depend on your actions. Fate is like a main road, and self-determination enables you to choose the various little detours and paths and shortcuts on that main road, but the main direction is determined by fate.

Robert is constantly concocting, it really is full of promise.

"I've been drawing all my life," says Robert, wistfully. "I didn't get really serious until puberty though." And as you'd expect of any right-minded youth: "That was because of anime and manga." Then came sci-fi, fantasy illustration, American and European comics, then 19th century art.

"The characters in my stories all have specific personalities and I try to capture that in the illustration works, as I do with fine art portraits," explains Robert. A close look at any of his work confirms

So these are some of the things that are driving Robert onwards, fuelling his need to push his skill horizon ever further. Conveying the kind of emotion he requires with any subtlety demands a mastery of every element of a production – there is no part that doesn't matter.

ACCOMPLISHMENT AND AMBITION
His goals also help to make sense of his statement: "I don't think I've accomplished much at all." Drawing that picture into sharp relief, he adds: "I have big dreams and

> ## 66 I'm self-taught in everything I do. I get really bored of schools and classes, even on subjects I'm passionate about 99

this. The faces have been thought about before being introduced to Wacom and Photoshop. They aren't just faces from a magazine. Lending weight to this, Robert explains that he's intrigued by introspective people: "They have depth and a wealth of powerful emotions and feelings kept just under the calm veneer." He strives to create this type of individual in his work for us to be fascinated with too.

The influence of manga and anime are clear in the artist's desire to bring out a deeper sense of meaning from his work: "I'm interested in conveying more than just a pretty picture," he agrees. It's about genuine contact between artist and audience: "I want people to be able to look at my pieces and read more into them than just the surface."

lofty goals, so whatever I've done to date pales in comparison to what I'm trying to accomplish." Although Robert could make a professional living out of any of his accomplished skills, he names a few other ambitions: "To win major film awards as a writer/director, to have my novels published to critical acclaim in the literary circle, to release music albums of my music."

Not only is this vision on a grand scale, Robert Chang wants to do the whole thing without the influence of being taught: "I'm self-taught in everything I do," he says. "I get extremely bored of schools and classes, even if they are on subjects I'm really passionate about." You could say his goal is a bit like climbing Everest with a toothpick. And you'd laugh if he weren't already half way up the North face.

Visit here
LEARN TO PAINT LIKE ROBERT CHANG

You can discover how Robert Chang paints by following his detailed tutorial in this issue. Robert guides you through the entire process of painting digital fantasy art from the sketch to the finished work using Photoshop and Painter.

Frank Frazetta

Influential artist Frank Frazetta is a grand master of fantasy. His lifetime's work captures the magic of the genre…

Fantasy art owes a lot to Frank Frazetta. Conan, Tarzan, Death Dealer… just a few of the man's famous pieces would have been enough to exert a defining influence on the field, but his output has been far more prolific than that. Not only have his powerful and versatile images made him a force within the genre, he has also helped to put fantasy itself on the artistic map

Anyone who's even had so much as a passing interest in fantasy art will probably have wondered how Frank managed to be so far ahead of the competition; however, a brief history of the artist himself is very illuminating Born in late 1920s Brooklyn, Frank was always going to be an artist. Family legend has it that he began drawing at the age of three and had outgrown junior school by the time he joined it. Enrolled at the Brooklyn Academy of Fine Arts aged just eight, the boy's talent was nurtured by his tutor, Michele Falanga, himself a talented painter A cry of "Mama mia!" went up when Frank proved he was a prodigy and not a precocious brat

LET IT SNOW

At 16, Frank went to work for the famous comic book artist John Giunta, and a year later his first comic, Snowman, hit the shelves. He learned a lot from Giunta, commenting: "You can see a lot of his influence even today in some of my ink work." By 1952 Frank had turned down a career in professional baseball and was beginning to find his feet as a professional artist

Magazine Enterprises published his first (and last) full-length comic book, Thun'da, and he had a regular strip – Johnny Comet – in a national paper. This was the high point of Frank's involvement with comics, his work on Flash Gordon was even name-checked by George Lucas. But he then took a job with Al Capp, ghosting a strip, Li'l Abner. This, Frank admits, was a mistake "I shouldn't have done it, but I was lazy"

AND THE GOOD NEWS

When Frank and Al Capp parted company eight years later, the world of comics had moved on and the great man found himself out in the cold The break came when Frank's best friend, Roy Krekel, suggested he produce covers for novels

Frank's wife, Ellie, credits a caricature of Ringo Starr, painted for Mad Magazine in 1964, as the true beginning. This is an astute observation because it was during the '60s that the now iconic images of barbarians and buxom slave girls began to appear It was also during this time that Frank began to hone his compositions

The fact that Robert E Howard's Conan series sold millions meant Frazetta covers were de rigueur for fantasy novels. Luckily, for Frank, few people could work as quickly Paintings such as Neanderthal are reputed to have taken just six hours to complete

LEGEND

His reputation established, Frank went on to produce a series of increasingly amazing images,

notably Death Dealer and Silver Warrior. It was all there: composition, subject matter, style and audience. Princess of Mars, from 1970, produced as part of an Edgar Rice Burroughs' re-release program, shows a more considered, mature side to his work

He began to cut back his production in the '70s, however, and by the '80s he was plagued with illness. A comeback was cut short in 1995 when, returning from being presented the first Spectrum Grand Master of Fantastic Art award, he suffered a series of strokes

Through his determinism and flair, Frank Frazetta has made it okay for artists to plumb the imagination without feeling the need to kowtow to the art establishment. He made it acceptable to produce images of warriors and monsters Fantasy art took a step forward into the light of possibility with Frank Frazetta; for that alone he deserves the status of our first ImagineFX Legend ●

SILVER WARRIOR
Produced for Dell Books in the 1970s, Silver Warrior was not only a return to form but one of Frank Frazetta's most memorable pieces.

PROFILE

CAT GIRL
Easy Tiger. Cat Girl became something of a theme for Frank as his later work clearly shows

PENCIL SKETCHES
Frank's pencil work, much of which has only recently been published, shows the amazing grasp of human anatomy which underpins his imagery
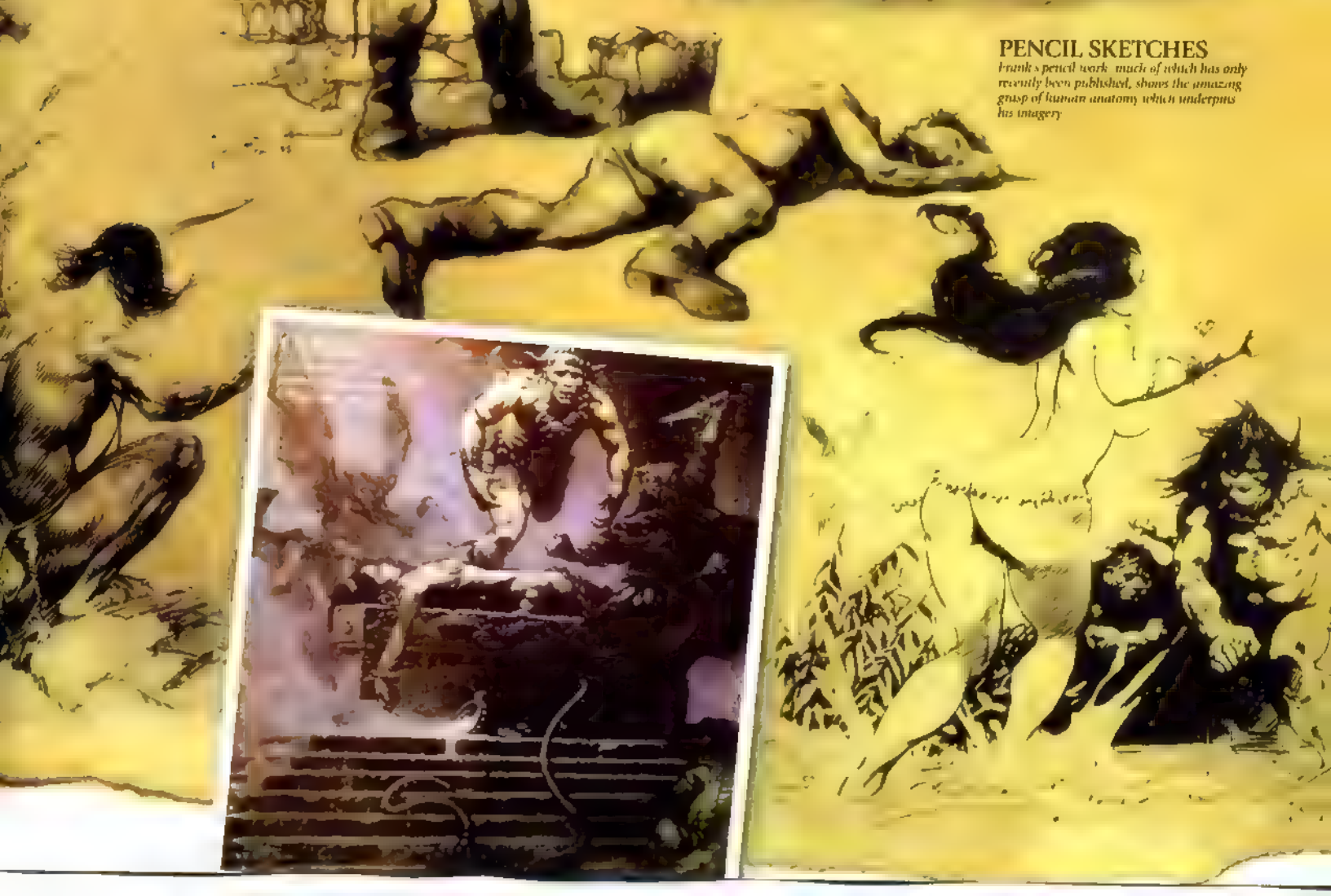
Artist portfolio
JIAN GUO

Architect by day, fantasy artist by night – is there no end
to the talents of this Chinese digital painter?

Artist portfolio: Jian Guo

Jian Guo is a native of China's largest city and the world's busiest port – Shanghai. A qualified architect, he spends his days producing CAD designs to feed the now legendary growth of his home town. "And after a day at work I go home and create my art."

Though not a professional illustrator, Jian Guo has taken on a number of commissions, including book covers and posters. Even so, his work is produced, by and large, for the love of digital painting and fantasy itself. As the man himself says: "Everybody loves to challenge their imagination."

ONCE UPON A TIME

"I think it started when I was at nursery school," says Jian Guo. "The teacher was training some of the children to paint traditional Chinese watercolours for the guests who were going to visit the school." Finding himself among the lucky few planted the creative seed which later developed into a serious digital art habit.

But the road was far from straight. "After nursery school and even in my college days I hardly had the opportunity to get into my stride. I only had time to do some simple comic-like paintings in the margins of my exercise books," he explains. Art of any kind was put on hold while the practicalities of life took hold.

"Then, about four years ago, I was searching for some information on the web, and I found some beautiful illustration on a CG site and that was it." The online world was calling and

Jian Guo answered. "I began to learn how to use the computer to produce art."

RE-AWAKENING

Discovering that the computer could be used as an artistic tool was a creative revelation for Jian Guo. "After all, I only drew comic-like pictures on paper before that," he says. Discovering the huge community of online artists waiting to check out his work was the stimulus he needed to start work.

Like many, Jian Guo's transition to digital art was done in stages. "In the beginning I would put my ideas down on paper, then scan them and finally do the colouring on the computer." But because he didn't have a classical background, this approach quickly felt contrived. "Now I put my sketches directly on to the CG canvas, it's more convenient to adjust and I don't need to worry about the size of the canvas."

And of course it's easier to get your work seen, too. "You can get the advice you need to fix the shortcomings in your work," he explains. "And you can learn more advanced skills and ideas from better painters". The web certainly plays a central role in the seemingly unstoppable growth of sci-fi and fantasy art. That fact is nowhere more true than in China.

SHANGHAI STYLE

A brief skim of the postings appearing on the web's digital art sites will pretty quickly tell you that there's something going on in China. Jian Guo agrees. "It is a new field here in China, but there are not many restraints or

Artist PROFILE

Jian Guo

AGE: 29
COUNTRY: China
FAVOURITE ARTISTS: Linda Bergkvist, Sparth, Matt Dixon, Bobby Chiu, Aleksi Briclot, kuang Hong
SOFTWARE USED: Corel Painter

beathing2004@yahoo.com.cn

Artist portfolio: Jian Guo

rules in CG painting so it's very popular with young people."

There's another factor too. "The popularisation of the computer is a really positive factor to promote this tide of new talent," suggests Jian. There's a rapidly growing generation of artists who've caught on to digital art just as it's started to come of age. "And there are plenty of channels to show your work, unlike traditional drawing."

The rapidity of China's development means that not only has this new swathe of artists hit creative gold in the shape of the PC, they've also found that they can compare notes and develop their skills incredibly quickly. Lacking the technological baggage that comes from a prolonged association with anything digital means the art coming from China has a refreshing and original feel to it.

CALL OF THE WILD

Jian Guo rightly points out that it's part of the human condition to strain at the boundaries of what is real, to repeatedly test hypotheses. It's this drive which attracts people to fantasy art. "There's far more freedom in the creation of the image, and that takes you beyond everyday life!"

But despite the escapist angle, what makes Jian Guo's work so appealing is its brilliant narrative quality. "Even if it is just a character design," he says, "my idea is to make the picture show more story." It's this which makes each image so absorbing to look at, the fact that the scenes are fantastical only add to the effect.

The sources of inspiration are many and varied. "Sometimes it's from novels, or more often from a simple sentence I heard in a film or on the radio," he says. This should not come as a surprise as Jian Guo's pictures have a whimsical feel to them and often a number of visual focal points. Considering that, as he says himself, "I am not a professional painter so I don't have too much time to train my skills", they are enviably sharp all the same.

TRAINING TO SLAY THE DRAGON

How to create a whole story in one image

Jian Guo has a great eye for story-telling detail. Take his favourite scene from Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers, it's not a simple case of 'the bit where x happened', he paints it like a picture. "It's when Sam and Frodo pass through the broken statue of the king and a thread of unexpected sunlight is shining over the yellow flowers that surround the head of the king, then Sam says to Frodo 'Look! The king has his crown again!'

Similarly in his own work, it's not enough to just paint a picture of a knight and a dragon having a set-to. "Whenever I saw the knights and dragons fighting," explains the artist, "I think, why are the knights so brave that they can face the wicked dragon?" Put like that it's a natural question, but one that is regularly answered [...] they are.

Jian Guo's conclusion. "They have certainly received the special training. This training is probably very brutal, perhaps it takes the dragons to be the training object?" But Jian Guo is a gentle soul and adds "I didn't want the picture too bloody, so I did it in a kind of black humour style."

KNIGHT TALE
Jian Guo demonstrates [...] picture really can say [...] thousand words

WAVES
"If you go diving into the deep" cautions Jian Guo, "You might see the Myst creature..." (left)

NIGHTHAVEN
In Nighthaven (below) Jian Guo conjures up a real sense of character with this unlikely duo

Artist insight: Marcel Baumann

Digital art DECONSTRUCTED

Every month we examine an eye-catching piece of art. We ask the artist about the inspiration behind it, how it was created and just how long it took them. This month, it's **No Control** by Swiss artist **Marcel Baumann**.

ImagineFX: No Control is a striking piece of work. Tell us the thinking behind it.

Marcel Baumann: I had a dream where I was in a similar situation. I'm sitting on the back seat of a car, being driven up a mountain street. As I am not the driver, I have no control over it. Suddenly another car appears and drives on the same side of the street towards our car. There are a few metres and just a few seconds left – enough time to realise what is going to happen and enough time to think of the two possibilities: is it a dream or is this the end? Then the car crashes into ours. Everything fades into white, then black.

The character is finding himself in an extreme situation he can't escape from. At this moment he is trying to break out of his dream but still covering his face from the heat and brightness of the fire. The oil tanker that breaks through the dam moves the character into a surreal world. He stops and believes that he can survive but at the same time he is not accepting that it is real. And most importantly he is not accepting that he will die.

Because there is still the possibility that it is a nightmare, he tries to break out of the dream with all his mental force. Now he is between the two worlds. He is finding himself in the bed of the reality but simultaneously the fire of his nightmare is still surrounding him.

I choose No Control as the title and the name of the ship. This explains that we don't have control of what we are dreaming, just like the tanker captain who loses control and crashes into the end of the ocean. It shows the feeling of a character who is reaching the end of his world.

The feelings and experience in that short moment of switching between the two worlds are the parts that I wanted to capture. I tried to integrate this idea into a spectacular visual impression of that dream, to support the story and make the viewer feel like the character.

IFX: How long did it take?

MB: I guess it took me about 20 hours, if you speak about just the painting time. The developing of the concept and composition is for me the most important, interesting and difficult part of creating a picture. That time varies from picture to picture. For No Control, I worked quite a long time on the concept because I wanted to be sure that the result would be spectacular and tell a complex topic. Next to the concept, the technique and painting has a big influence on the final expression of the image and helps to support the story. I sometimes spend a lot of time making final adjustments.

> **❝ I try to motivate the viewer to complete the picture in his own mind ❞**

The quality of a painting doesn't depend on the time that was needed to complete it. Sometimes a sketch created in 30 minutes can have more expressions, communicate an idea and inspire the viewer more than an over-detailed painting done in 30 hours. I've stopped counting the hours I work on a painting, because I think a good piece of work shouldn't be measured by time. For example, if I work on an environment that fascinates me enough, I don't want to leave that environment too soon. I try to find what I originally imagined and develop it.

During drawing and painting I get new inputs and sometimes these can change the picture dramatically. This way of painting is like expressing feelings which are not possible in any other way. I paint for as long as I am having fun. Sometimes big pauses are needed to get some distance from the work, to come back with new energy.

The result is not only the painting. Afterwards I get the feeling that I was in that environment. It becomes more real in my mind than a picture can ever be. I try to motivate the viewer to complete the picture in his own mind. If you really try to feel yourself inside a picture, your imagination appears more real than the original picture. A goal of doing artwork should be to inspire others.

IFX: Can you explain the techniques used? And how do you typically work?

MB: I used Photoshop and a Wacom Intuos3 A4 for this piece. Usually I use round, hard brushes to build up the picture and custom brushes for some special effects, like fire and water. I built a simple 3D mesh in 3ds max to test perspective. I also took a photo of myself inside the bed, over painted it and added new textures. Everything else was hand painted.

I start to work on a painting when I have an idea that I'd like to share. I get such ideas from dreams, inspiration through the environment, humans, architecture, movies and just about everything! And of course I get important inspiration by drawing and painting. Once I've got the idea, I try to capture it in a quick pencil sketch. From there, I develop new ideas that are closer to the imagination. I can't capture my imagination exactly, because it's like trying to speak in another language. Because the information is based on imagination it's hard to translate it into a visible picture. This may all sound like I think a lot during drawing, but I think I just do things intuitively. My work and techniques depend on a lot of different motivations ●

THE CONCEPT

"The developing of the concept is for me the most important, interesting and difficult part of creating a picture," says Marcel

SURREAL IDEA

"The tanker that breaks through the dam moves the character into a surreal world. He believes he can survive, but he is not accepting it is real."

PROFILE

Marcel Baumann

AGE: 20

COUNTRY Switzerland

Marcel is currently working as a storyboard artist for the forthcoming Swiss science fiction movie, Cargo. After starting drawing at the age of eight, Marcel soon progressed into 3D modelling and animation. He discovered his love for digital painting just over a year ago.

www.marcelbaumann.ch

FXPosé

Nicolas Bouvier

LOCATION US
WEB www.sparth.com
EMAIL nbsparth @ gmail.com
JOB Concept designer, ID Software
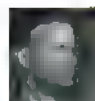
Nicolas Bouvier, aka Sparth, has been an active artistic director and concept designer in the gaming industry since 1996. Born in France, he now lives in Texas and works for ID Software. "I've been lucky enough to travel extensively," says Sparth. He says that he takes in all around him, resulting in wide artistic interests. "From space, to buildings, to robotics and beyond." Sparth has worked on game development since 1997, including. Alone in the Dark 4, Cold Fear and Prince of Persia - Warrior Within. For the last four years, he's also had fun illustrating book covers.

1 HEINLEIN The first in a series of four Robert Heinlein covers, published by Folio SF of France. The covers linked together to form a long scene representing the evolution of man in space.

2 ELLIPSOID COMPLEX An epic scene showing the landing of a huge space entity. "I consider this illustration to be one of my major works," says Sparth.
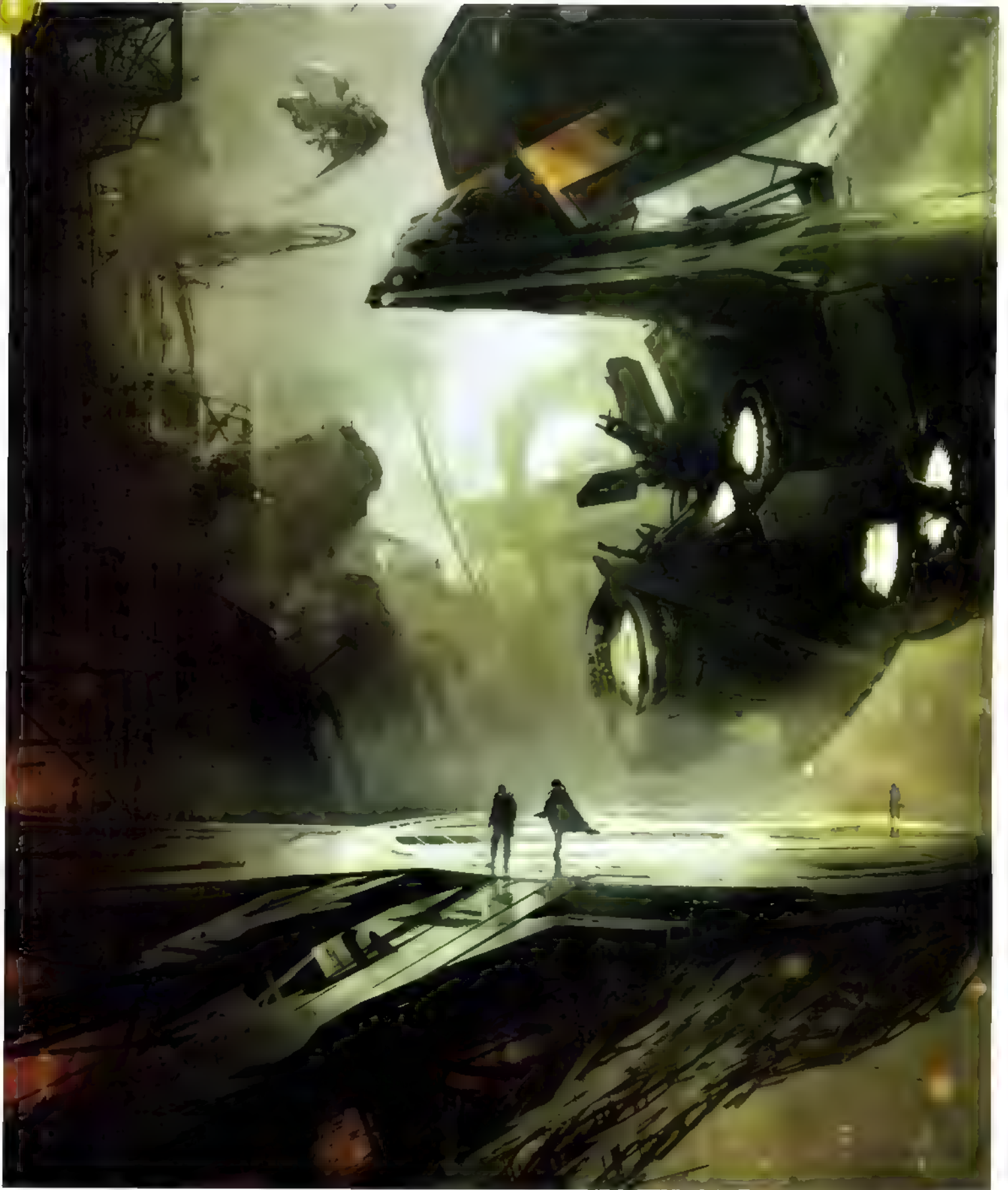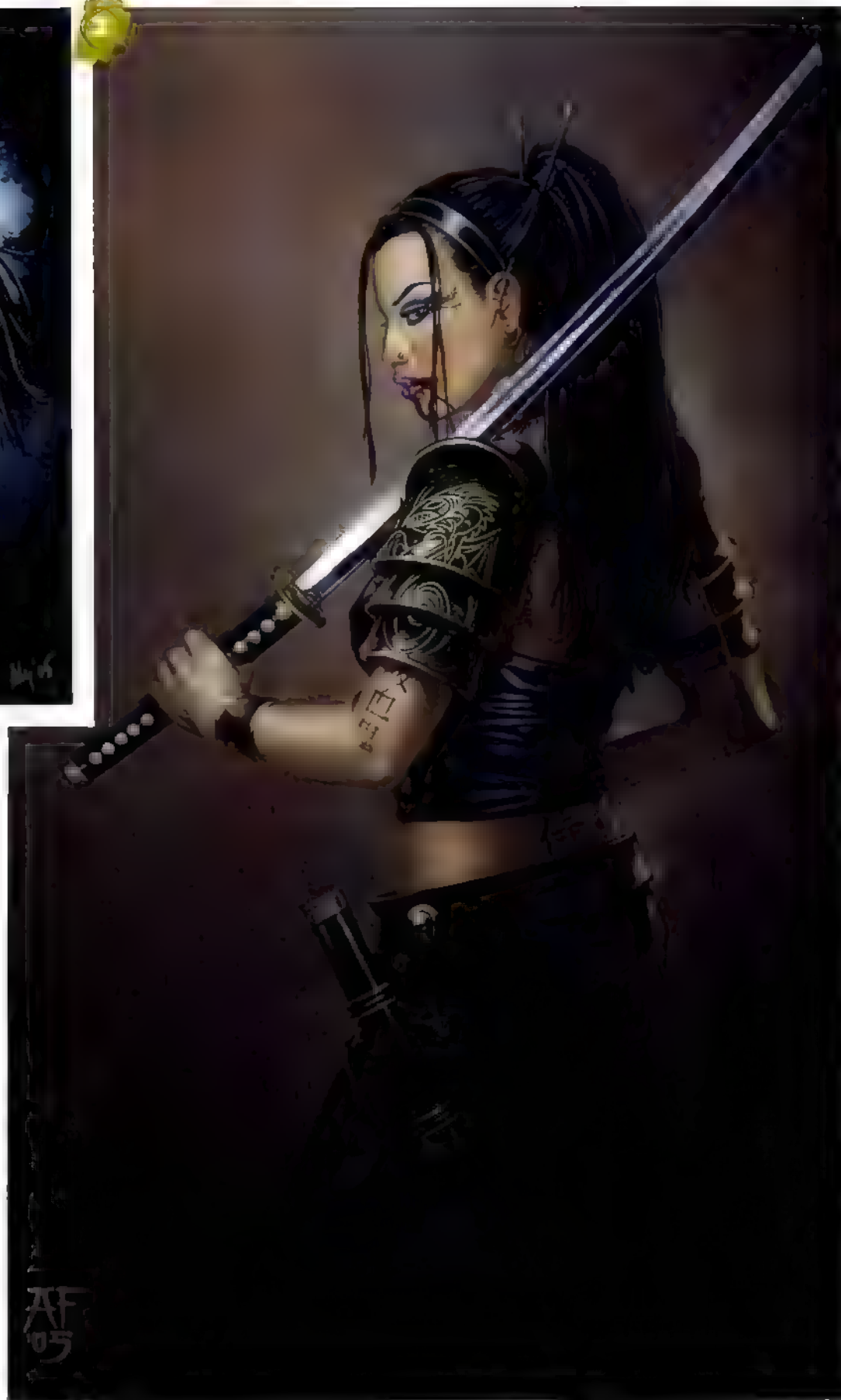
Aly Fell
LOCATION UK
WEB www.darkrising.co.uk
EMAIL alyfell@darkrising.co.uk
JOB Concept artist, Eurocom
Entertainment Software

Aly has also worked at Core Design and the legendary Cosgrove Hall Films, on classics including DangerMouse and Count Duckula. It was at Core Design that he really started to get to grips with Photoshop. "And realised not everything has to have a black line around it!" He adds: "I grew up on a diet of Michael Moorcock, John Wyndham, Dr Who and Star Trek." This gave Aly an affection for sci-fi and fantasy and he believes this is what put the kink in his work.

1 SERRAN THE HUNTER "She's meant to be a transdimensional dragon hunter!" This is one of Aly's quicker pieces, completed in about four hours.

2 SAMURAI VAMPIRE A cover done for a magazine with a vampire-related theme. "The character specifics were done to requirements, hence a lot of blank space around the girl," he says

Jaime Jones
LOCATION US
WEB www.artpad.org
EMAIL jaime@artpad.org
JOB Freelance artist

"At 15, I fell in love with digital illustration through the discovery of the artists Craig Mullins, Kristen Perry and Linda Bergkvist," says Jaime. "I was amazed by their ability to realistically create fictional worlds. I studied their processes and teached myself to work similarly." By his senior year of high school, he'd developed a decent portfolio of illustration to display on his website. Jones helped on 'Phantom Jack' by Mike San Giacomo and signed a contract with Marvel on his 18th birthday. One job led to another and Jaime's freelance clients now include Wizards of the Coast, BL Publishing (Games Workshop) and AEG.

1 WARBOT Aberrant games needed a box cover illustration of a security robot miniature. "The idea was to paint something full of action and interesting light effects," explains Jaime.

2 CSO PEACEKEEPERS For Aberrant Games' Rezolution miniatures game. Peacekeepers are the fast-deployment soldier types.

THE WORLD OF KONG
A NATURAL HISTORY OF
SKULL ISLAND
WETA WORKSHOP

THE WORLD OF
KONG
A NATURAL HISTORY OF
SKULL ISLAND
WETA WORKSHOP

FOREWORD BY
PETER JACKSON

KING KONG
SEE THE MOVIE

Responsible for designing
Skull Island and its fantastical inhabitants
for Peter Jackson's epic *King Kong*, the artists at Weta Workshop
have created a rich and diverse world of wonders and terrors to
thrill viewers everywhere. Hundreds of drawings were created to
populate the mystery island, building a comprehensive menagerie with
complex ecosystems and forbidding habitats. Though only a handful
appear on the cinema screen, presented within these pages is a vast
collection of creatures and lore, each lovingly depicted with production
art and new illustrations created especially for this book.

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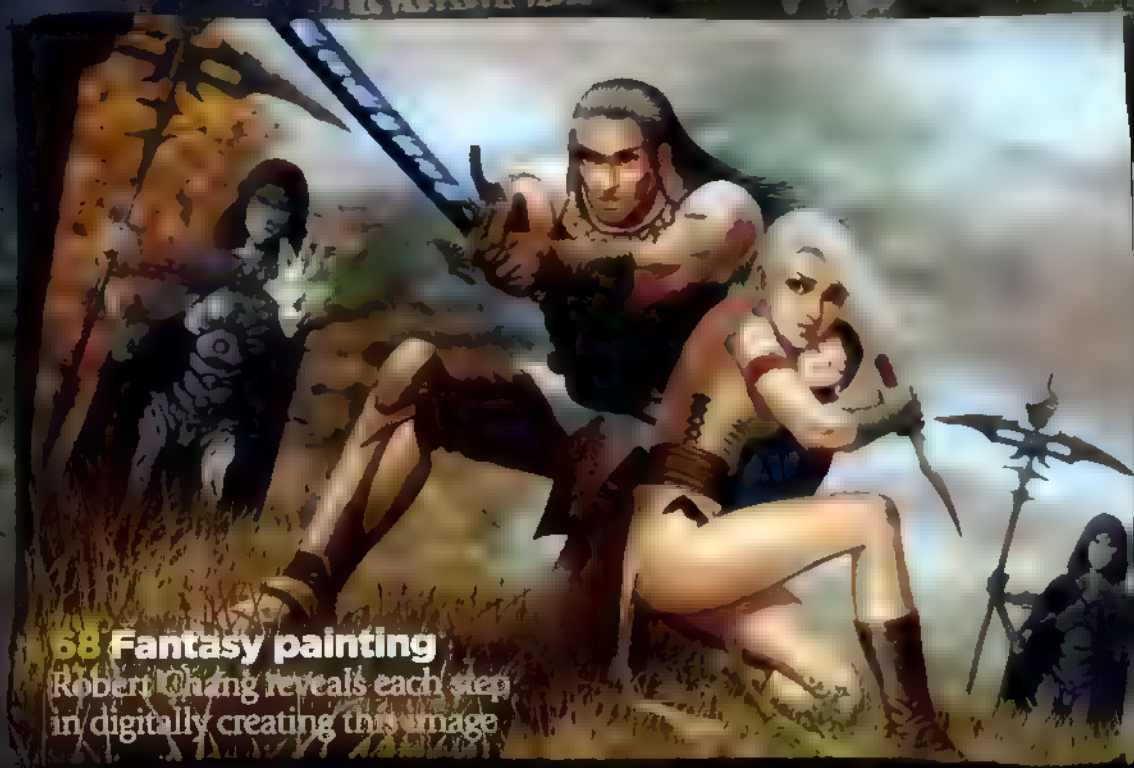
68 Fantasy painting
Robert Chang reveals each step in digitally creating this image
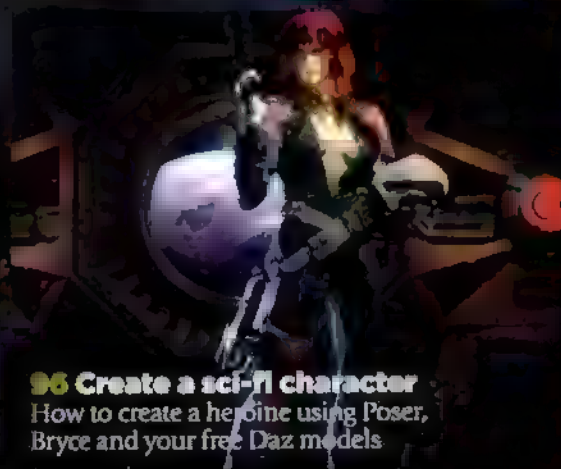
96 Create a sci-fi character
How to create a heroine using Poser, Bryce and your free Daz models
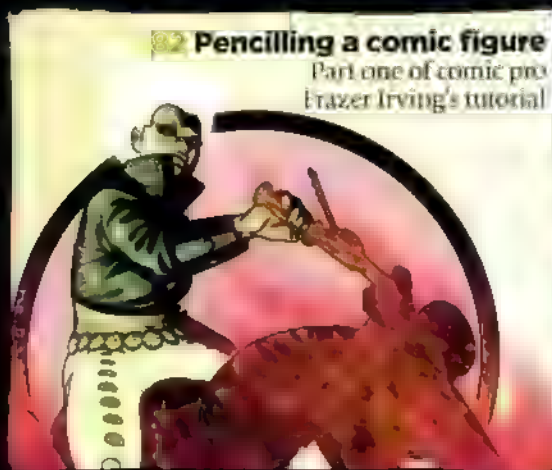
82 Pencilling a comic figure
Part one of comic pro Frazer Irving's tutorial

If your DVD is missing please consult your newsagent

Painter & Photoshop

DIGITAL FANTASY PAINTING

This tutorial guides you through each step of painting a fantasy digital painting using Photoshop and Painter. By **Robert Chang**

ARTIST PROFILE

Robert Chang
COUNTRY: China
CLIENTS: Optidigit, Red Orb, Sirius Entertainment

Robert grew up in Taiwan and the US. He's a self-taught artist, writer, composer, photographer and director. He's worked in all those fields but most recently in video games and CG animation.
www.cgportfolio.com

This tutorial is for my newest painting, Till Death Do Us Part, and it depicts a family of three (mum, dad and baby) being hunted by demon stalkers. The parents protect the baby with their lives, while the demon stalkers conjure dark magic using the skull of a fallen comrade as the source of power. The father counters the assault with his own magic, channelled through his sword.

This tutorial will take you from the sketch all the way to the finished painting. You should be fairly familiar with Photoshop and Painter for this tutorial, as some of the tips are exclusive to each software. However, the best way to learn from a painting tutorial is to not get hung up on the software details, but to understand the mentality and the approach of the artist.

Today's software is highly competitive and often have similar tools, that's why understanding how and why an artist uses a specific tool is more important than duplicating the tutorial

step-by-step. Ideally, you should have some basic art foundation to attempt this tutorial – whether it's from formal training or just time spent as a hobbyist

You should also have a tablet suitable for digital painting, such as a Wacom Intuos or Graphire product, or their equivalent. Digital painting with a mouse is like cooking with a hammer – a special kind of punishment to test your tolerance for lack of efficiency and ergonomics. My motto is: gimme a tablet or nothing at all

want. If everything looks fine, I'll move to the next stage

The first sketch

I always start with a very rough sketch using desktop resolution (either 1600x1200 or 1280x1024). I have this habit of filling the blank canvas with light grey, because a glowing white monitor is too harsh to stare at. I never draw on the background layer, because having a separate layer for the drawing is easier to deal with when you start making corrections and edits later. I always do the early stages in Photoshop because it's so much better at editing than Painter, and there's always a lot of editing in the early stages.

The first sketch is normally so rough that the only person who could understand it is myself. Once I'm happy with the composition, I'll fade that sketch layer to about 20 per cent opacity, open up another layer and then do a clean drawing using the faded sketch as a guide.

In case you don't know, flipping the image horizontally (or looking in the mirror) is an old illustrator's trick. I have never seen a scientific explanation for this reasoning, but my guess is it's because we all have a bias, depending on whether we're left or right-handed.

Favouring one would mean that your brain is wired to naturally lean in one direction, so when you look at your drawing in the mirror, you'll notice what appeared to be proportionally fine has obvious mistakes such as crooked eyes or slanted vertical lines. I flip my image horizontally as soon as my brain gets

used to seeing the shapes, so that means I'll flip the image between five and 10 times over a couple of hours when I'm painting.

I wanted a dynamic feel when depicting this scene, so I used a tilted horizon and a slight worm's eye angle. Usually, when I'm happy with the drawing, I'll go ahead and delete any sketch layers I don't need any more, and I'll also turn the background back to white and save a JPEG version for the sake of documenting the steps

The colour rough

This stage is what I call the colour rough stage, where colours are blocked in quickly to be tested out. I usually put the colours on another layer, and either have the drawing layer on top as a Multiply layer, or vice versa – as long as the drawing can be seen clearly along with the colours.

When blocking in colours, I'm basically testing the colour scheme to see if it works. I'll also do some fast shading as well, to get a feel for the lighting I

PRO SECRETS

Back track

I always compare my current progress with earlier versions. The reason is because frequently, while painting, I'll refine/change/add/erase in such a way that actually has negative effects on the painting. Sometimes I would spend a long time refining a face, then when comparing it to an earlier version, realise that the earlier version looked better. When that happens, I'll cut and paste the old version over the new one (just the area that looked better in the older version)

Colour evaluation

In this case, I didn't like the original colours that I'd done, so I went ahead and tweaked the colour rough into something closer to what I had in mind. I knew I wanted autumn colours, and I decided either an overcast or partly cloudy sky would be best to convey the feeling I was after

On with the painting

Now the painting phase officially happens. It's actually not a good idea to separate drawing and painting, because you never really stop drawing while painting, but for the sake of clarity, I make a clear distinction between the two. This helps to organise the process.

When I start this stage, I always fade the drawing enough so that it doesn't make the values/colours hard to read. I sometimes go ahead and erase parts of the drawing that I don't need any ➤

more, because the colour rough has already defined them. Usually though, I just fade the lines so that I can still see them, but they don't overpower the image

Next, I throw all caution to the wind and flatten all layers. Yep, this is when serious business begins. I would then most likely start the official painting on a separate layer, so the colour rough is undisturbed. There's a good reason for that, which I'll get into later

As you can see, I decided that I wanted to have some blue in the sky instead of a completely overcast sky. This part was done in Painter because I wanted the wet-on-wet aspect of Painter's brushes for the clouds. Photoshop cannot simulate wet-on-wet painting. I also made sure their skin tones reflected the blue of the sky. I started painting dad's face with broad brush strokes. I pretty much nailed the look I wanted right off the bat, something which rarely happens!

In the early stages, I tend to be bolder with my brushwork, then as the painting progresses I become more cautious, which is a bad thing because all the spontaneity goes out the window and things start to stiff up. Ideally, I should be bold throughout the entire painting process, not just early on
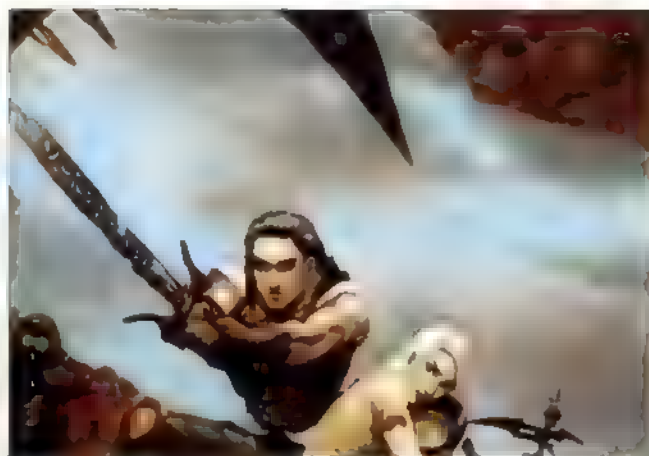
5 Work on the sky
I decided that I wanted the overcast sky back, however this time I wanted an over-exposed look, much like in photography where the sky appears overblown. I then gave the background a hazy look, a bit like fog or atmospheric haze. I also made lots of changes to the dad's face

Shortcuts
Full screen
F2/F3 (PC)
A custom-made action in Photoshop that toggles between the Cursor or the Crosshair

6 Stop and review
I decided I liked the old version better, so I cut and pasted it back. Notice that I also wanted the blue sky back again (this time it stayed). This is why I said to save steps, so that you can compare to the older versions to see if you're going in the right direction or not. Also, when I said it's good to keep the colour rough on its own layer, it's so that you can click on and off to compare and see if you're doing all right compared to the feel you created originally

A lot of changes happened here. The mum's face and body proportions became totally different, but I hated them after comparing the new version to the older one. I can't stress enough how important it is to keep comparing to the old versions, because you could veer off the right track and not know it. I tried a different design for the demon stalkers, but it didn't seem to work. I also designed the skull scythe weapon, but it didn't feel right

I added the mountains in the back, using one of the Wet Acrylic brushes in Painter, as it gave me the squiggly bristle lines that I wanted. I also changed the dimension of the image to be a standard desktop proportion

7 Make your changes
I changed mum back, but altered her pose a little. Dad's legs were moved to a different angle. You can see that the leaves have gone from the top right corner. I wasn't sure if I wanted them any more, so I got rid of them for the moment and liked how the sky opened up for a different feel. I also decided that the mega shoulder pad armour cloak design for the demon stalkers looked silly, so I changed it back to a plain hood and cloak. I also thought it

might look better to have double-bladed scythes, as they look a bit like a cross, and I can't recall the last time I saw anyone design a double-bladed scythe. The mountain got tightened up a bit, and I painted the autumn coloured trees on the left. I used a palette knife with the Random jitter on for that impressionistic leafy look

Here's an important point: if you're about to make some big changes, always do it on a separate layer, because it's extra security in case you don't like your changes. Working that way in Painter is a problem, however, because some of Painter's brushes will leave artifacts (dark, random marks) on the spot where you paint on a blank layer that has no background
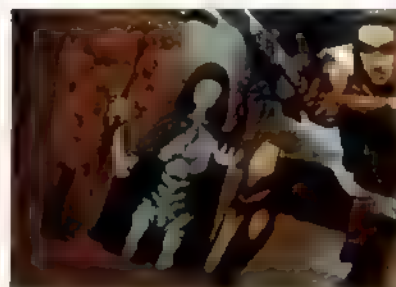
8 Character assessment
The demon stalkers got redesigned. I wanted them to be more like puppets, with empty ivory shells filled with black smoke (demonic creatures with no set shape), and I wanted the smoke to drift out of the cracks and each orifice of the puppet shell. I also thought the brown of their cloaks made brown too much of a dominant colour, so I changed this.

9 Lighting
I felt the sky was too dark, and I remembered an older step where the sky looked like it was overblown and overcast. I tweaked the sky to look similar to that older version, using the Histogram tool. I noticed the lighting on the family and the background were inconsistent, so I changed the values on
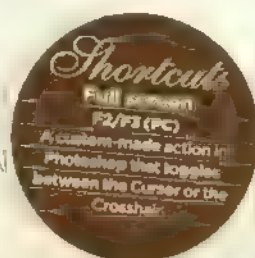
the background to match the values on the family. I gave the demon stalker in the middle a demon skull, so he could use it to channel the power of a fallen comrade (the green ghost fire)

Remember I said to keep things on separate layers if you can? Here, I changed the position of mum's leg and, because the family is on a separate layer, it was easy to make changes. You can see that the old colour rough is still underneath where the leg used to be, so that means I had to paint more background to cover it up

10 Trial and error
Sometimes you get into the 'zone' and just keep on painting. Here, I was in the zone painting the dad and mum's faces. I thought that I was doing fine until I checked against the previous version and realised that the older one looked much better. The newer version had more detail and was technically more accurate, but remember this advice it's always better to err in the name of aesthetics, than to look ugly for the sake of technicality
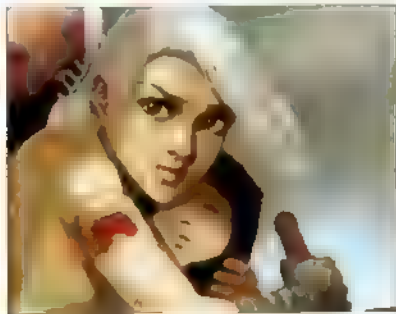
11 Body shapes
I gave the dad glowing runes on his sword and a bit of a glow trail. I also cleaned up dad's entire body. I painted in clean, flat colour bases for various parts of his outfit, so I could start painting in the decorations and patterns. I also painted his leg armour. At this point, I felt a bit insecure about the way the mum's legs were lit, so I had my wife pose for me and took some reference photos, and they definitely helped a lot.

I had put off painting the baby since the beginning, because I had never painted a baby before. I began by studying a bunch of baby photos on the internet and made some mental notes Among the points I noticed were that babies have really large eyes and tiny noses, and their features are all soft curves, bunched together like a cat. I think I ended up with a pretty okay-looking baby
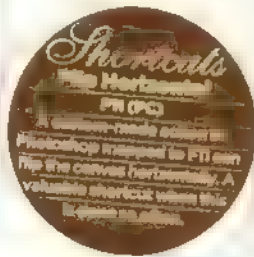
12 Decoration
Decorating always takes a long time, because you might paint some intricate pattern for a shirt or a sculpted relief on some building and then decide that you hate it. You'd have to go back to the drawing board and come up with a new design. In this case, I painted patterns and sculpted relief for dad's armour. The carved wolf's face on dad's belly armour plate was a spur-of-the-moment idea, which I think works well I also spent some time refining their muscle definitions, skin and consistency in lighting.

13 Consistency
After the above step, I had to do some more refining for consistency in values and lighting on mum and dad, finish their hair, and add more design elements to mum's outfit She had seemed too plain next to dad's fancy outfit. For painting the ground, I went for a new approach – I just randomly applied any colour that was remotely suitable for autumn colours, then used various blending brushes in Painter and tightened them together. ➤➤

14 Rough him up

I noticed that the shape of one of the clouds happened to mirror the shape of the scythe in the foreground. I decided that I had to adjust the cloud shape so there wouldn't be any weird or obvious tangents. I then started to paint in the grass in the darkest value first. Dad looked a bit soft, so I roughed him up by giving him a five o' clock shadow, using one of the bristle brushes in Painter, and some loose strands of hair on the forehead

15 Grass layers

I painted the second layer of grass with a different value and colour Then I added more layers of grass. I ended up with something like 10 layers of different colour/value of grass. I had to carefully keep track of which ones were behind the family, and which ones were crushed underneath their feet To paint the cast shadows from the

PRO SECRETS

Layer system

Although I hate having too many layers, I try to keep them separated for as long as my sanity can take This is especially important for complex paintings with layers of background, middleground, foreground and so on. At the very least, I try to keep the background and foreground on separate layers, because it makes drastic changes much less frightening. However, for simple paintings that aren't elaborate in composition, I prefer working on just one layer if possible – it feels more like painting

blades, I began by collapsing all the grass layers. Then I copied that layer onto the clipboard, undid the collapse, pasted in the clipboard, turned that layer into a single earth toned multiply layer at 50 per cent opacity, then transformed it so that it sat at the angle the sun was shining down

For better control of lighting consistency, I had to isolate each grass layer and either add shadows or add highlights. I also decided to add some fallen leaves. I chose to paint only one leaf, then I duplicated it many times into different colours and orientation. I treated the leaves with an eraser to give each one a more unique shape. I introduced a few holes, made by bugs chewing on them

16 Never-ending story

Below is the finished painting... or not. I always find things to change or add after I've decided a painting is finished and the signature is signed. This time, I realised the mum and dad looked too clean, so I gave them bruises, blood stains, dried mud and cuts

One of my favourite parts of a finished painting is finally being able to collapse bunch layers into fewer layers or just flatten the whole image. Similar to when film makers say: "It's a wrap!" or the video game creators say: "Ship it!"

I learned some things that I didn't expect to learn while painting this piece I hope this tutorial reflects the lessons I've learned, and that you've enjoyed reading them ●

Photoshop

GO BERSERK IN PHOTOSHOP

Create your own Berserker concept and present it as a full
turnaround for 3D modelling or sculpting. By **Jonny Duddle**

For this tutorial, I'm going to create a Berserker character from scratch and present him as a character turnaround. I'll call him Bjorn. Character turnarounds are a common task for any concept artist working on games and films. They form the basis for 3D models or sculptures. They must have accurate proportions and give a clear description of a character's features, clothing, props and anatomy.

I use the proportions given in human anatomy books only as a guide,

particularly when designing a stylised character, like Bjorn. I'll make his head smaller proportionately to accentuate the bulk of his body.

Depending on the deadline, a turnaround could be several full colour views from different angles, or three rough sketches that block out the main elements of a character design. Some turnarounds are in a formal arms-wide pose for use as a template in a 3D package, while others are in dramatic poses and serve as a visual guide. I'm

producing a posed figure from three angles, which should provide plenty of information to a 3D modeller.

Before getting started on an original concept it's good to get immersed in the subject matter. I like to spend a couple of hours browsing the internet for images of barbarians, armour, skulls and weapons. I look through my book collection and flick through fantasy art and historical reference books. After a couple of hours my head will be buzzing with ideas, so I'll start drawing.

1 Thumbnails
I normally approach a brief with a bunch of thumbnails. I sketched Bjorn digitally, using the Conte Pencil brush, which is one of Photoshop's Dry Media brushes. This brush gives a lovely line and gives the sketch a real pencil look. I only produced six thumbnails for the Berserker, but I generally scribble until I feel I've got a strong idea or direction.

2 Set up a sheet
If the height lines are set up correctly at the start, the template can be used for future images. Use Photoshop's grid, guides and the Line tool to produce the template. Begin with an A3 sheet (420x 297mm) and set the units to mm. With the grid and rulers showing, drag a guide for the top height line at 30mm. This is quick and easy with snap turned on. Drag another eight guides down and place them every 3cm, which fits within an A3 sheet. Create a new layer and use the Line tool, set to 1mm, to draw in the lines. Setting up the turnaround height lines is the least interesting job, but it helps create accurate turnarounds and it helps the modellers. Name this template: eight heads.

Shortcuts
Move layer up or down
Ctrl+[or Ctrl+] (PC)
Apple+[Apple+] (Mac)
These shortcuts move layers up and down within the Layers palette, to keep them organised.

PRO SECRETS
Layer masks
I'm a big fan of layer masks. Layer masks enable me to paint out areas of an image without actually deleting the pixels. If you paint on your layer mask in black then you hide areas of the layer; painting in white reveals them again. For example, I used a layer mask on the height lines layer to paint out where the lines intersected with Bjorn. As I made changes to Bjorn's silhouette, I could easily reveal and hide the height lines using the layer mask.
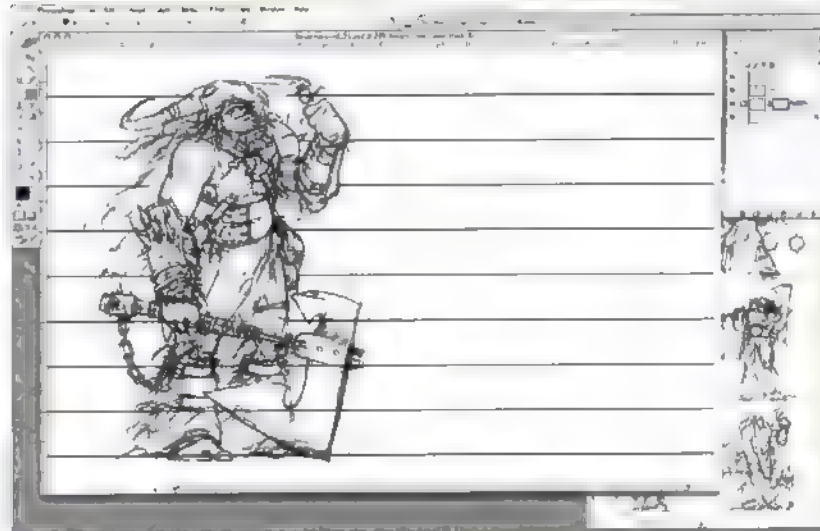
3 Designing Bjorn
Create a new file at 480x290mm and drag across the height lines from the template. I use Edit>Transform>Scale to stretch the height lines across the width of my new canvas, then choose one of my thumbnails to work up into the front view of my Berserker. Where appropriate, I like to add humour and character, so I plump for the final thumbnail with the Berserker and the little bird.

Drag your chosen thumbnail onto the turnaround image. Set the blending mode to Multiply to keep the black lines visible and the white areas transparent. Scale the sketch to roughly fit the height lines and reduce the layer's opacity. Use this as a rough guide. Once again, I use the Conte Pencil. I don't worry about getting all the details in for now, but the drawing needs to be proportionately accurate to form a good basis for the painting (apart from accentuations like a smaller head and longer ape-like arms).

4 The back and side views
Once I'm happy with Bjorn's front view, I copy the layer, flip the copy horizontally using Edit>Transform>Flip Horizontal and drop its opacity. It can then be moved over to the right-hand side of the image as a template for the back view. The back view has the reverse silhouette, so I trace the edges while adding details and think carefully about the shapes and orientation of limbs and objects. At this stage I realise that I need to scale the front and back views to give more space for a side view. The side view is tricky due to the different angle. I use the copied front view at 10 per cent opacity and the height lines as a guide. On a turnaround like this, I think it's more important to clearly show all the elements of the character's design than to get hung up on a perfectly accurate side rendition of the front view. I keep the back and side views rough for now, because I may alter the front view. ➤
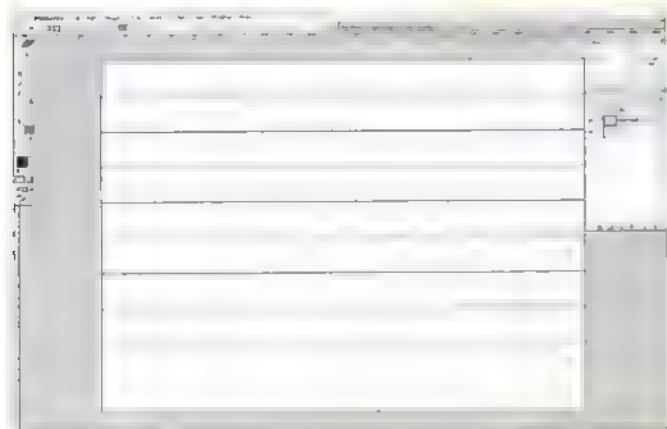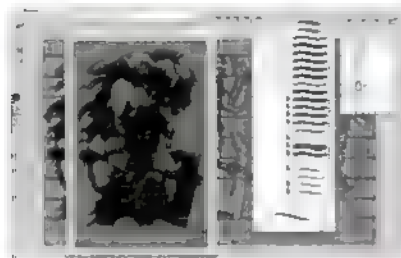
5 Blocking colour

I create a new layer and fill it with a mid grey to give a neutral background colour. I then paint in a base colour for Bjorn's front view. I often work with a deep desaturated blue as a base colour, because it gives a neutral backdrop. My favourite brush for blocking colour is Photoshop's Chalk 17 pixels with opacity set to Pen Pressure. I scale the brush up and down a bit while I'm working, but this brush works perfectly for me.

I create three initial colour layers above the line drawing and build a layer set for the background elements to keep my Layers palette tidy. I have a main colour layer, a detail layer and a separate layer for hair to allow some experimentation with Bjorn's hairstyle and beard. I try to keep the layer count down to avoid confusion and to keep the file at a manageable size. I crop the image to include only the front view. I won't need the back and side views for a while, so I'll reassemble the turnaround sheet later.

6 Adding facial detail

With the base colours blocked in, I start adding detail to the face. The face is important in establishing the character and personality, and I like to get it painted early to help clarify where I'm heading with the design. With the face and the other areas of skin, I use blobs of pink and blue to add interest to the flesh colours. I give Bjorn a pink nose because

Shortcuts
Duplicate layer
Ctrl+J (PC)
Apple+J (Mac)
This shortcut is useful for duplicating whole layers and is great for separating sections of a layer.

PRO SECRETS

Managing layers

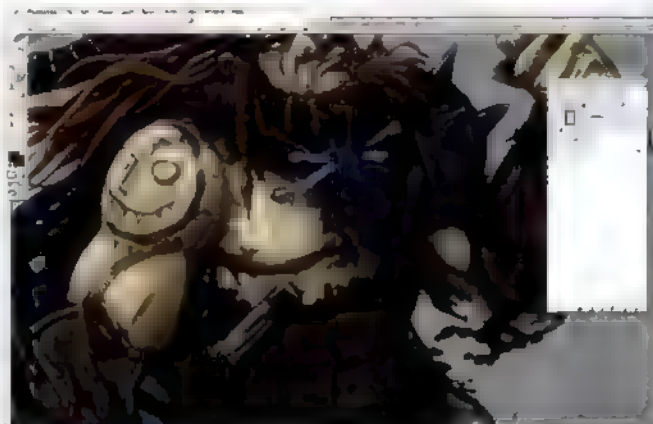At 480x290mm and 300 DPI, an image can become cumbersome as the layer count rises, and even a fast machine with plenty of RAM can start chugging, which can affect the performance of my brushes. With this in mind, it's good to keep layers organised. Giving your layers names can save time. Use the Locks to lock pixels, position or transparency and avoid working on the wrong layer. And try not to create layers willy-nilly. Remember that more layers mean bigger files and a slower machine.

I imagine him on a cold and windy battlefield. I also give him a confused expression as he stares at the little bird

7 The shadows layer

The shadows layer is a quick cheat. On more illustrative pieces, I tend to paint the shadows into the image, but on concepts a separate layer is good for flexibility and speed. I like to play with different blending modes. For this turnaround I use Vivid Light and set the opacity of the shadows layer to 50 per cent. I paint most of the shadows in a dark saturated blue which transforms into interesting browns and greys over the painted layer

8 Painting fur

For the hair and fur, I paint a dark base layer which I work over with lighter and more saturated brush strokes to build up the strands and flow. Working up from a darker layer gives a good depth to hair and fur, particularly if there are variations in the detail colours. The fur is painted quickly with a straggly brush
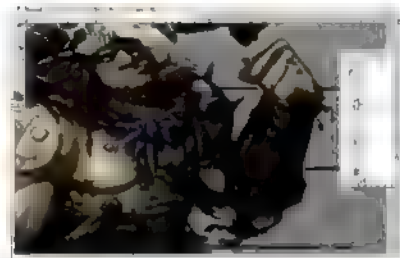
9 Painting metal

Metal painting either seems to flow from the brush and work just how you want it or become a terrible struggle. It usually demands high contrast, to mimic reflections across its surface, so I block in most of the metal in very dark tones and then begin adding desaturated greens, blues and browns to build up the surfaces. I like to experiment with different brushes with varying opacities to help develop texture. I gradually work lighter until I'm painting in white to pick out highlights.

10 Finishing touches

With the fur, hair and metal rendered, I work around the image adding in and tightening details, such as belts, straps and hanging objects. I finish with the bird, a robin. When Bjorn's front view details are complete, I drag him onto the turnaround sheet and start tidying up the image for presentation. For clarity and flexibility, I opt for a white background, but I leave silhouettes of grey within the back and side views. This gives volume to these views against the full colour version. I check the height lines and edit the layer mask to ensure they don't intersect Bjorn. Once I'm happy with the alignment and masks, Bjorn is finished ●
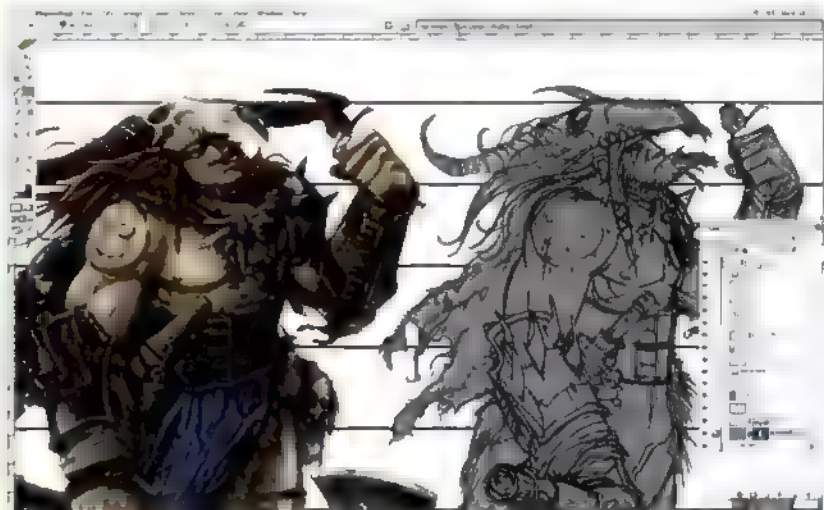
PROFILE

Tim Warnock
COUNTRY: Canada
CLIENTS: Warnock...
includes Warnock...

[faded profile text]

DVD Assets

The files you need are on the DVD

FOLDERS:
Custom Brush
Brush Tools
Photoshop
DOWNLOAD
Photoshop CS

Photoshop

CREATE FILM SETS IN PHOTOSHOP

Find out how digital matte painters bring the seemingly impossible to the big screen. By **Tim Warnock**

F ilm scenes frequently rely on vast backdrops and fantasy imagery which would be too costly or impractical to build or find. This is where matte painting comes in. Visual effects artists are called on to create both simple and elaborate illusions for films, by painting over a real image. Historically, matte painters worked on glass, which was then superimposed over actual film footage in early 20th century movies.

The technique saved having to send film stars and huge set crews off to remote locations, while also adding key details, atmosphere and uniqueness to a set. Examples of matte painting on glass range from classic 1940s Hitchcock films to the fantastical action sets witnessed in the first round of Star Wars films.

Painting has come a long way since those early days of painting on glass. Today, using Photoshop and a variety of 3D tools, artists create complex, multi-layered environments that incorporate elaborate camera movement that was once very difficult before the use of digital technology.

In this tutorial I will be using a combination of photo manipulation and digital painting techniques to create a 2D matte painting. Beginning with a finished sketch, I will explain the key concepts to creating a matte painting. Working files and source images can be found on the CD so you can zoom right in and see what I have done. It's time to get started!

1 Getting started

I started with a sketch that I painted over a photo. I began by replacing the sky, doing my sketch over several layers so I could place my new sky on top of my sketch and have the foreground elements overlap it. I like to work from back to front, dealing with one element of a sketch at a time.

2 Sky replacement

Using several photos, I extracted the sky from the image using Channels. In the Channels palette I selected the Blue Channel, which had the greatest contrast between the sky and the rest of the image. I duplicated this Channel by clicking and dragging it on top of the Create New Channel icon.

With the duplicate channel selected, I typed Ctrl+M (PC) or Command+M (Mac) to bring up the Curves palette and boost the lights and darks to create a strong silhouette. I cleaned up any stray specs using a hard edge brush, then held down Ctrl (PC) or Command (Mac) and right-clicked on the channel to create a selection. Next, by clicking Ctrl+J (PC) or Command+J (Mac) I extracted the sky from the photo. After combining several sky pieces, I dropped the resulting work into the scene, over my sketch.

3 Distant mountains

Using 'distantMountains.psd' on the DVD, I selected the Red Channel and duplicated it like I did in the last step. Using curves, I boosted the contrast,

but not as much as I did for the sky extraction. By clicking and holding on the channel and then dragging it into my matte painting I had this new channel to use as a mask.

On a new layer above my mountain sketch I added a light colour, sampled from the sky with the Eyedropper tool, and a soft brush. I painted in the highlights of the mountain. The Channel wasn't exactly the same size as the mountains so I moved the mask around to work on different parts of the mountain.

4 Ground plane

I used the Lasso tool to extract some trees from a photo, for the area beyond the ridge. I used the Layer Mask again to soften the edges. To add the river, I sampled a light colour from the sky and with a standard chalk brush painted it in, on a new layer. Finally, on a new layer with a soft airbrush and the same light sky colour, I painted a soft haze along the base of my mountains to blend the ground plane and the mountains.
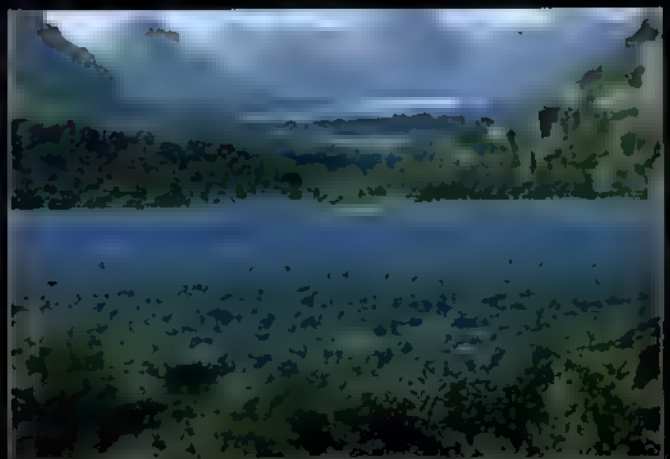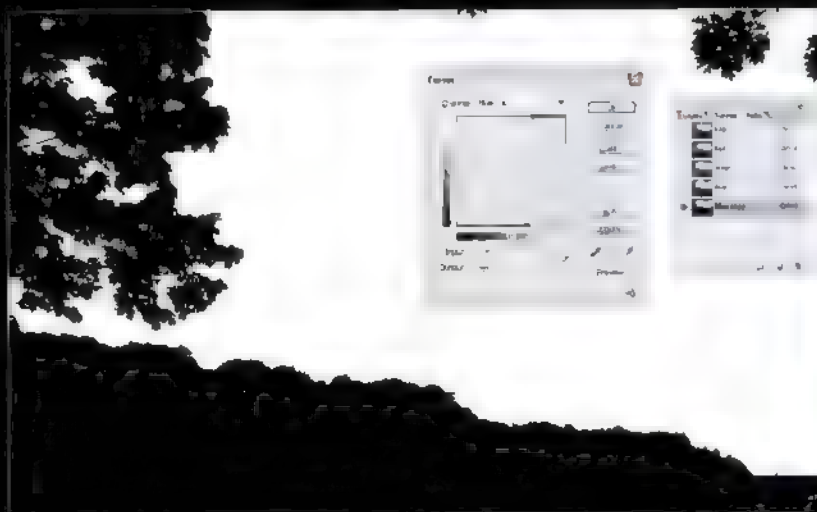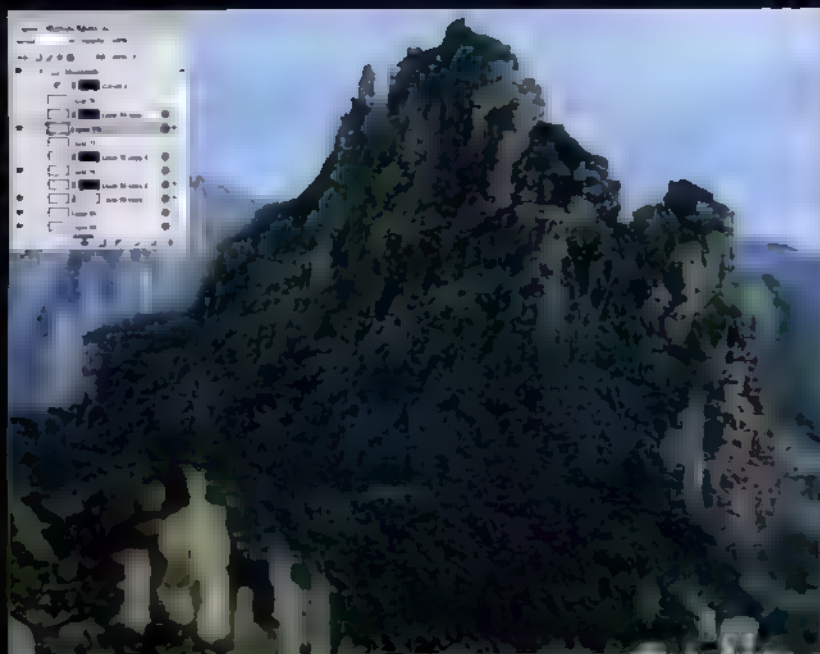
5 Rocky mountains

For the larger mountains I began by gathering bits and pieces of tree cover from several photos. I looked for similar land shapes to my sketch. I used my ground plane as a scale reference. Using the Eraser tool I cleaned up my edges to fit over the sketched mountain. For the rocky portions I used the same process but was careful to watch the scale of the rock texture so it was appropriate for the size and distance of the mountain.

6 Re-lighting

The mountains looked flat, so I needed to re-light them. First I duplicated my tree layer: one layer for shadows and the other for light. The shadow layer went underneath. Starting with the shadow layer I applied a colour overlay that was accessed by double-clicking the layer. I chose a dark colour from the sky and brought the transparency of the overlay down until it matched the colour of the shadowy parts of my ground plane. I used curves to reduce the contrast.

7 Turning on the lights

I set the Blending mode of my light layer to Screen and applied a layer mask. With the layer mask selected and with my colour set to black, I pressed Alt+Delete (PC) or Option+Delete (Mac) and my light layer to completely mask it out. With a soft brush I painted white on to the mask, revealing my highlights. Then I used Curves to adjust the colour of my highlights to match what was on my ground plane.

8 Mid ground plane

Much of the mid ground was still intact from the sketch, but some portions of it were a bit too soft or needed to be re-lit. So, using the same photos that I did my sketch on, I overlaid them back on top of the sketch. Next, I applied a layer mask to each piece, filling
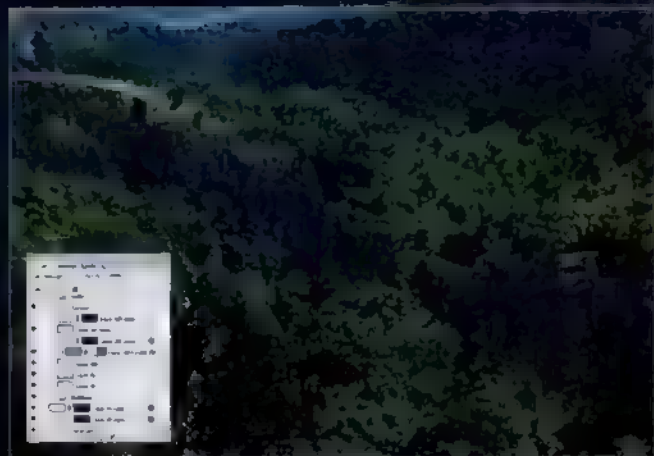
PRO SECRETS

Perspective

Having solid perspective is critical to making a scene believable. To set up a basic perspective grid, I first found my horizon line. I created a series of horizontal lines, generally in a bright colour. Then, by pressing Ctrl+T (PC) or Apple+T (Mac) to activate Transform, I lined up the centre of the transformation with my horizon line. By right-clicking on my transformation I selected Perspective from the menu and distorted my lines to achieve the desired perspective line angle. I duplicated the process for additional sets of lines

the mask with black to completely mask out the image. Then with an airbrush/soft brush, I painted back in the portions of the new photo where it was necessary.

For creating the cast shadow from the mountain, I used the Lasso tool to select a portion of the ground plane and then by pressing Ctrl+J (PC) or Apple+J (Mac) I created a new layer from that piece. Using Curves, I reduced the contrast of the image and boosted the blue curve slightly to match the shadows in my scene.

Canyon

On the layer masks for the ground plane, I masked out the area for the river canyon. Following the same process for the rocks used on the mountains, I placed pieces of rock photo underneath the ground plane layer. This enabled me to quickly duplicate large pieces of rock and not be concerned with having to fit them to the sketch, since the ground plane mask is already defining the shape of the canyon.

From here all I needed to do was re-light the rock using the same lighting method as before. Then on a new layer, using a simple chalk brush with colour dynamics turned on, I painted in a few small corrections to the rock and added in final details, such as cracks and changes in form.
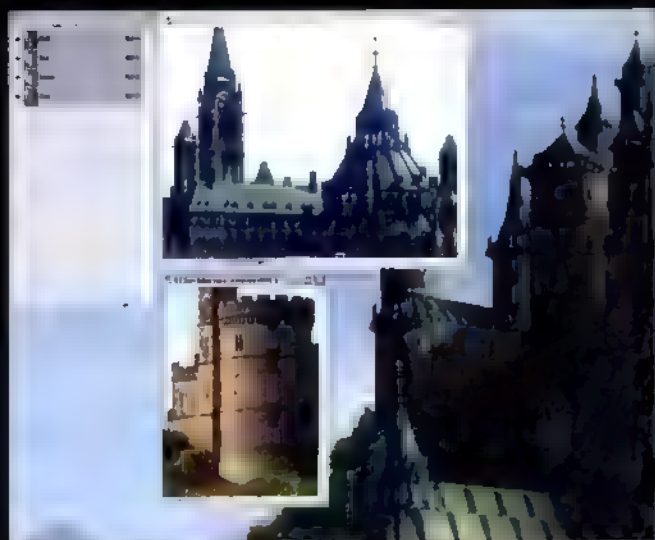
10 Waterfall

Working from a photo, I used the Lasso tool to select a portion of the waterfall and position it in place in my scene. I went to Edit>Transform>Distort to tweak its perspective. I used a layer mask and a soft brush to feather the edges of the image so that it blended smoothly with the existing rock. Finally I used curves to correct the colour. With scattering turned on in the Brush palette I painted in small details, such as foam at the bottom of the waterfall.

Bits and pieces of water photos were placed into position in the same way, and then painted over, to form the stream that pokes out from the trees. These details are so small and subtle that it's really just about indicating little glints of light from the reflective water to lead the eye and create the illusion of water running through the canyon.

11 Architecture

Using the extraction process explained in Step 1, I cut out a suitable roof piece from a photo and duplicated it, fitting it into place over my sketch. With the Transform tool, I scaled it and distorted it to give variety, playing with portions of the roof and stacking them on top of one another. In places where the curve of the bottom of the roof cone was not in the proper perspective, I used Edit>Transform> Warp to adjust that ellipse.

For the wall portions of the architecture I found another portion of a photograph. As with the roof I duplicated it, repeatedly, to create variety. Once these pieces were all in place I merged all the wall pieces together into one layer, and likewise all the roof pieces. I applied the same lighting principles to each, as I had done for the rocks and trees. As with many of the elements, I used Curves to do any final colour adjustments.

12 Bridge and building support

Both the bridge and building support were given the same texture. Using a portion of a photo of stone work, I covered the sketch and masked out any overlap, then I re-fit the photos. The key to making architectural elements look like they are sitting in their scene is to integrate the ground with them. By piling rock and painting in greenery around the base of them, it makes it look as if those items are really nestled into their surroundings.

13 Foreground

Much of my foreground was in the original photo that had been sketched over. To bring back some of the foreground trees, I overlaid my original photo, then used a layer mask to paint back in the desired detail. To texture the foreground rock I took pieces of rock photos and again went through the lighting process, but in this case I wanted the foreground rocks to be in shadow so that they would not distract from the main focus of the mountain village.
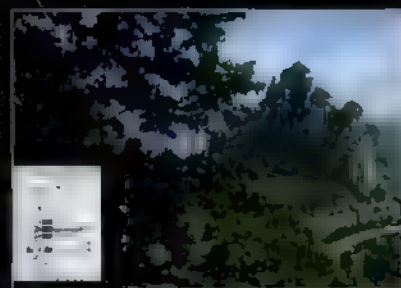
14 Final touches

On a new layer I painted in the final details, filling in holes that I'd missed. To create atmosphere and depth I created a layer and painted mist rising off the stream and waterfall. To achieve this, I used a cloud brush named number 16. You'll find this is in the Custom brush set that can be found on the DVD. Next, I added volumetric lighting effects, filled a new layer with black and set its attribute to Screen. I added a 50-300mm Zoom lens flare found in Filter>Render. I decided to add Gaussian Blur and increased the transparency, to give the final effect a subtle, but warm light. It's important to place the source of the lens flare in the vicinity of the light source. Finally, using a Curves Adjustment layer, I made the final colour tweaks to the scene. ●

Photoshop
PENCILLING A COMIC FIGURE

Frazer Irving shows the primary stages of creating and illustrating a comic book character using toda...

T he creation of comics has changed over the years, with new technologies moving in and altering how art is made, opening the potential for new avenues of exploration. My personal method of production has changed due to this, and this tutorial will give you a glimpse of how I (and maybe you as well) can create art using the tools at hand.

Almost all of the art I produce is done on my dual 2.5GHz G5, using a 30-inch Apple monitor and an A3 Wacom tablet. The methods I use reflect this, although a down-sized set-up will also do the trick.

I no longer use pencils to draw, but I do use brushes, so a printer is needed as well as a steady table. There will be more information on this in part two of this tutorial. For now, what you will need is a computer, Photoshop, a monitor and a drawing tablet, obviously the bigger the better, but any size will do, really.

I'm going to create and illustrate a piece called Little Biker Chica, in my current style. It combines traditional elements of illustration with modern Photoshop contributions. This first section concerns the pencilling of the character, from scribble to inking ready art, using my own preferred method. So, Wacom pens at the ready...

1 Get scribbling

All drawings begin life as a scribble, and in Photoshop there is no exception. I always start with a blank page with a white background. However this is not the surface I draw upon as it makes editing the scribbles tricky. I create a new layer, which I label Scribble, and pick a brush set at 20 pixels, and set opacity and size jitter to pen pressure. I then pick a light grey from the colour picker and I'm ready to go.

Initial sketches should be loose – feeling the form out without fear of ruining the image. For this reason I always sketch with a light grey, as I know I can draw over it to pick out details. The sketch won't interfere much with my refined choice of lines, either. Here, I have scribbled in the basic pose of the girl and the rough shape of the bike, using standard construction lines to figure out the proportions.

2 Refine the sketch

This is where the magic of Photoshop begins to come into play although my scribble layer is working okay, I don't want to draw any more on it unless I lose the basic pose. So I create a new layer above it, and using a slightly darker grey I draw over the scribble, picking out the bits that I think may work. In this shot, you can see I've

Shortcuts
Zoom and move
Apple + space (Mac)
Ctrl + space (PC)
Good for when you need zoom in quickly and then move around the image using the brush.

PRO SECRETS

Comfort zone

When drawing on the computer, it's essential to keep your keyboard within comfortable reach of your free hand, because you will be using it so much. Bad positioning of the keyboard can result in aches and pains. Try to use the keys as shortcuts instead of the toolbox or onscreen menus, as this improves workflow. Learn the keyboard shortcuts, modifying them if you need to.

focused on the leg and torso as an area worth refining. To help me in this, I've also been using the white to cut back the greys that show through from the layer below. All the layers are linked so any transformation will affect them all.
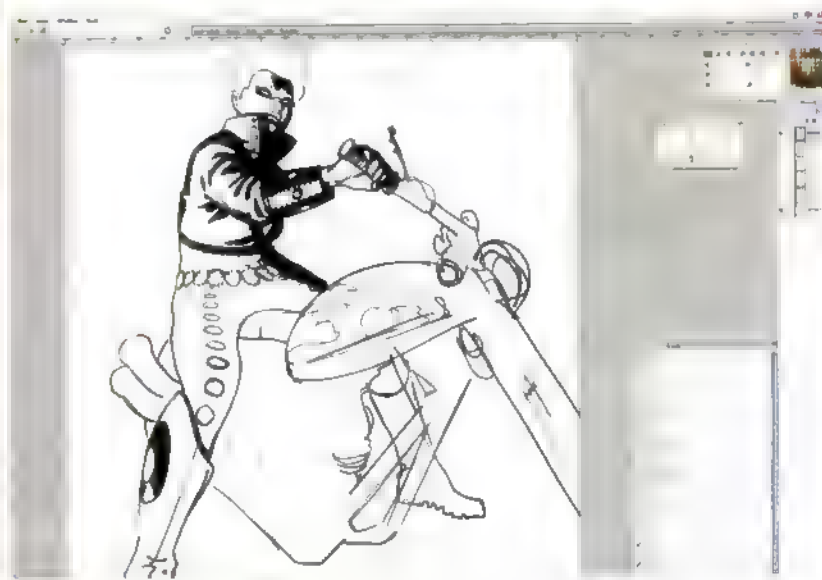
3 Anatomy

As I'm happy with the way the pose is developing, I create a new layer for the head, as I figure this element may need more editing than the others. Using the same process of greys onto the layer, filling parts with white to obscure confusing lines below, I slowly give shape to the head and features. Once the head is drawn, I can move it or resize it to fit in proportion with the rest of the figure. I can also check to see if everything else is in proportion too. The most magical thing about Photoshop for me is the free transform tool, which means I can tweak a hand or leg easily without erasing or ruining the paper.

4 Lighting

Once I've found the proportions and anatomy to suit my tastes, I move onto the lighting. I create another layer called, Tones, and set it to multiply. Then, using a thicker brush (created simply by hitting the | key) I very loosely paint in areas of tone, depending on where I want the light to come from. Since I'm still using the mid-grey, the tones don't obscure the lines below and it's easy to edit by hitting 'x' on the keyboard, flipping the foreground colour to white and the painting away the grey tones.

5 Tracing

The final stage is where I commit. I create a new layer, called Pencils, and select black as my foreground colour. Zooming in I start to trace the grey sketch, picking out the lines that work and ignoring the lines that don't. I leave the bike bare, as it will be fixed in colouring. This stage is still relatively sketchy, because I like to leave some decisions to the inking. I find that pencils are too precise to lack a certain energy. The outline is definite, as are the areas of black, all ready for inking in part two ●
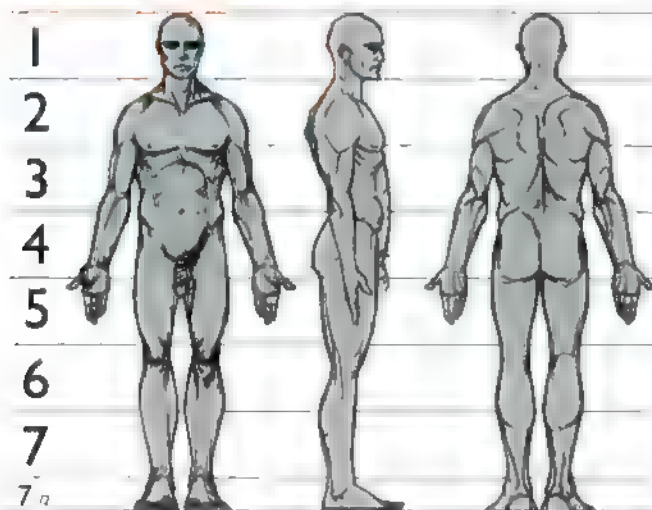
Part One

ANATOMY FOR BEGINNERS

Jonny Duddle's 20 essential techniques to set you on a path to creating fantastic art...

A s a concept artist and illustrator, human anatomy forms the basis of most of my work, whether it's realistic or stylised. I've learned a lot about anatomy since I started studying art at school. But I always feel like I should know more. I draw for a living. I read books. I draw from life. I try to maintain a sketchbook. But there always seems to be more to learn. In this series I will give some tips on improving anatomical drawing. In the first part I cover anatomy in the broader sense. Some of the tips may sound obvious, but I'm going to work through a list of what I think has improved my knowledge of anatomical drawing. I'm not going to make reference to any particular materials or specific techniques, because I think that they should be secondary to the act of drawing. Some of my illustrations here are produced digitally, while others are in graphite or ballpoint pen. In the second part I will look at specific parts of the body in greater detail.

PROFILE
Jonny Duddle
COUNTRY: UK
CLIENTS: Sony, Universal, Warner Bros, Eidos, Wizards

Independent games publisher Euro...

1 READ BOOKS ON ANATOMY

You can never know enough about anatomy. Everything you do know about anatomy will make your characters believable. And everything you don't know will have to be cleverly disguised.

2 LEARN THE HUMAN BODY'S PROPORTIONS

The common unit for describing the **proportions** of the human body is the head. According to reference books, an adult human is somewhere between **seven and eight 'heads' high**. But use this as a guide. Artists have been playing with the proportions of the human body for centuries.

3 LEARN THE BASIC MUSCLE MASSES

With most drawings, there is no need for every single muscle to be portrayed. Even the leanest body will have muscles that are hidden by tissue and skin. So to get started on drawing human anatomy, learn the basic muscle groups and how they cover the skeleton.
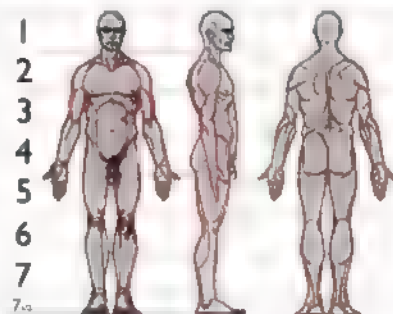
4 BASIC SHAPES

With knowledge of the body's muscle masses, you can break the form down into basic shapes. Look for strong shapes in the body and how they flow into one another. These shapes are good for starting a drawing of the human form, or for approaching a drawing of the body in a difficult pose.
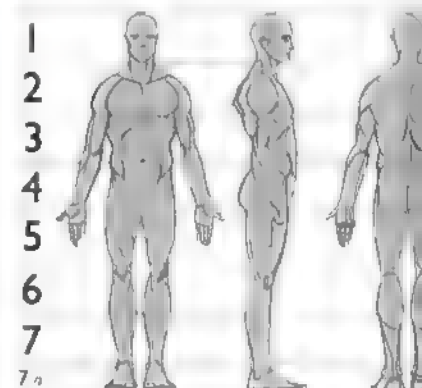
5 OBSERVE HOW AGE AFFECTS PROPORTION

As people grow, their proportions change. At birth the human figure is about four heads high. The head becomes proportionately smaller as a child grows up, an adult is roughly 7.5 heads high. In old age the body may shrink and the proportions may change again.
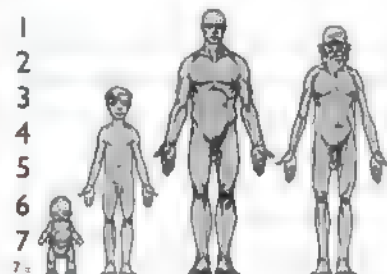
6

By adding the effects of light across a body, you can give a better idea of form and give an impression of **solidity**. Look carefully at how light and shade **affect the body** when life drawing or making observational sketches.

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7 1/2
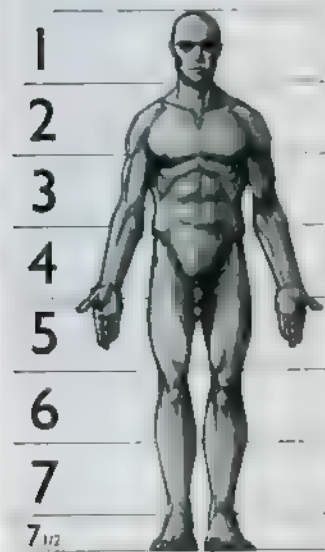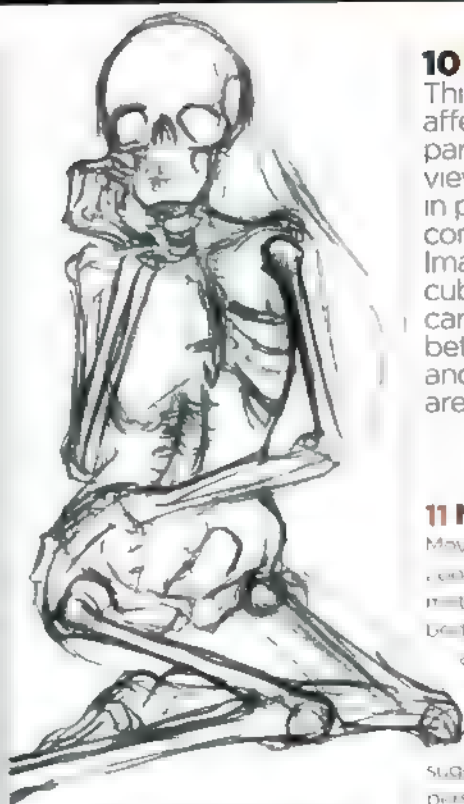
7 THE SKELETON

The skeleton supports the human body. Muscles are attached to the skeleton and there are many [...] where the skeleton is very [...] to other parts. [...] bone structure and look carefully at where bones and joints ar[...] [...] below the skin.

8 ROUGH SKELETONS FOR SKETCHING

A rough skeletal form can be useful for sketching the human figure in various poses. You could use it as an exercise [...] and [...] the skeleton moves within the body. A [...] could be [...] a stick man representation of the human form, [...] a base for the addition of muscles, clothing and detail.

9 THE HUMAN BODY IN PERSPECTIVE

When drawing in perspective, **break it down into shapes**. Look carefully at [...] [...] reference but **most importantly** [...]

10 FORESHORTENING

This term describes how the body is affected by perspective. In most drawings, part of a body is **coming towards** the viewer or is **bent away**. Use basic shapes in perspective to make these areas convincing before adding detail. Imagine cylinders, spheres and cubes in perspective. Look carefully at the relationships between parts of the body and the shapes that are formed.
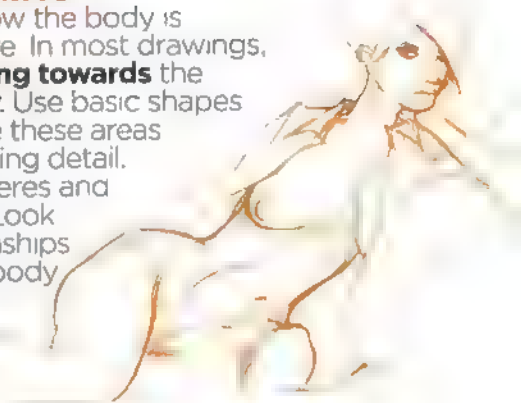
11 MOVEMENT

Movement can be difficult to draw. Look at photographs of people in motion to see how the human body can bend and stretch. Look at how artists have depicted movement in illustration, animation and fine art. Try different marks and [...] to suggest movement. Try [...] perspectives. Try exaggerating proportions and form.
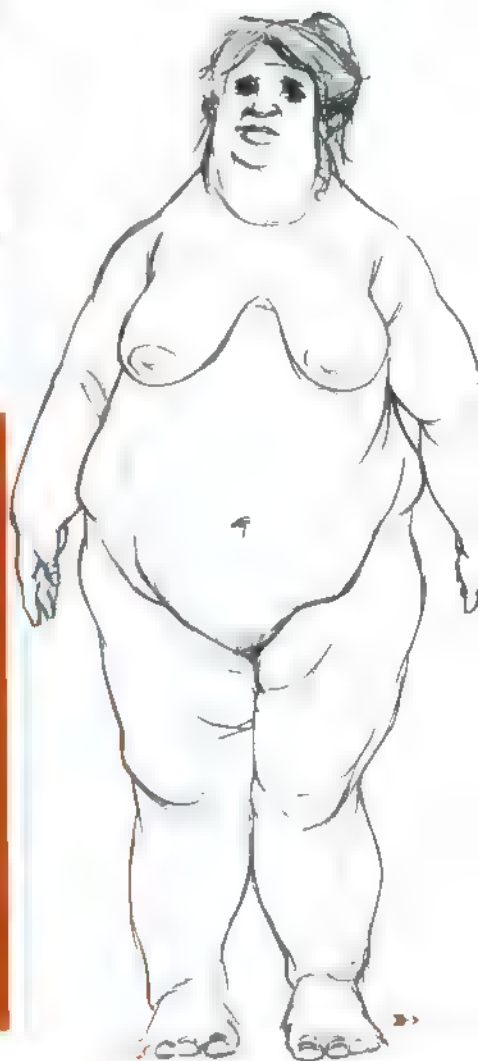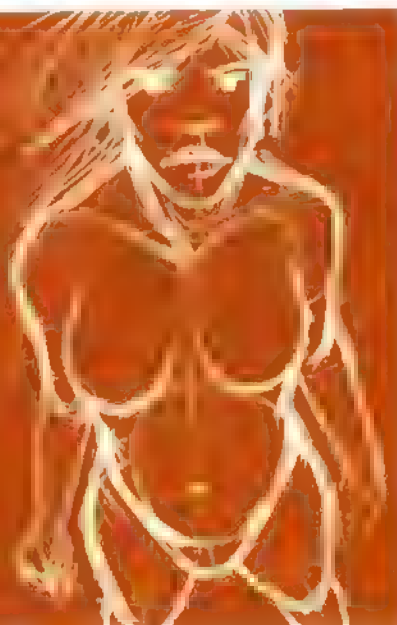
12 FAT

Fat changes the shape of the human body. Fat affects bodies differently but there are areas where fat is more common. [...] Men usually are fat more readily around the torso and stomach. Women [...] are more likely to put on fat around their hips, buttocks and thighs.

> **A rough skeleton can be useful for sketching the human figure.**

13 PROPORTIONS AND CHARACTER

Proportions can be a useful tool to reproduce or change... Even when sketching from life, you don't have... see. Artists often use... exaggerate... figure, via statistics... so it can be used to suggest personality traits such as aggression, anxiety, and physical abilities such as strength, speed...

> ❝ **Look in anatomical reference books. You can only improve if you know what you are doing wrong.** ❞

14 DRAW FROM LIFE

Nothing improves your knowledge of anatomy more than drawing from life. Draw friends, family and strangers, on the train, in a cafe or in the park. If possible, **attend life drawing classes**. Drawing from life will give you a better understanding of the human form
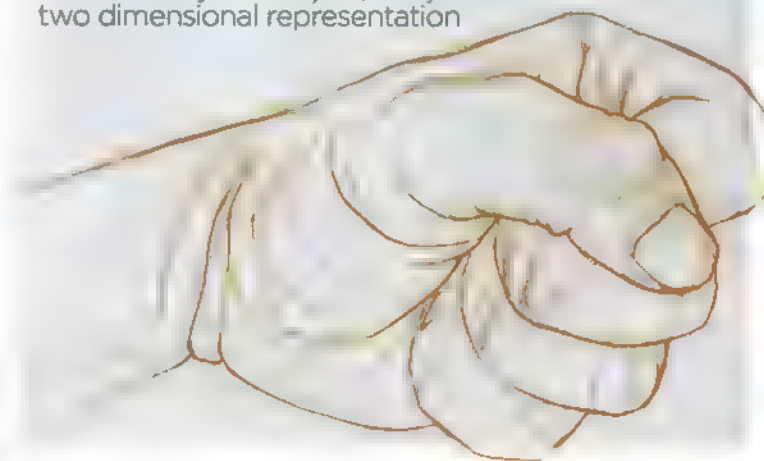
15 KEEP A SKETCHBOOK

A sketchbook becomes... resource and can be a fantastic tool. Try to **carry a sketchbook** everywhere and **make observational sketches** of... every opportunity...

16

You can't remember everything that you see. A camera can provide a host of copyright-free reference material. **Digital cameras** make reference photographs **cheap and accessible**. If you're stuck while drawing a hand, for instance, take some photographs of your hand and use them for reference. But remember to think about the form of your subject, not just the two dimensional representation

17 WATCH PEOPLE

Don't... look at people. Observe them. And see every part of what happens to their faces when they move. And other faces when they break. And watch how they all differ at times with... changes...

18 PRACTICE

Practice... get better at drawing... A... talent... only comes practice... of the human hand, only comes from drawing. And it's...

19 COMPARE YOUR DRAWINGS TO THE ANATOMY BOOKS.

Assess yourself and your drawings by comparing the drawings and observational sketches with anatomical reference books. You can only improve if you know what you are doing wrong

20 EVERYBODY'S DIFFERENT!

There is **infinite variety** in the human form. The more you draw people, the **more differences you will see**. And all these differences can add interest to your work. ●

FURTHER READING

ANATOMY FOR THE ARTIST
AUTHOR: Sarah Simblet
PRICE: £25
PUBLISHER: Dorling Kindersley
ISBN: 0751334413

ATLAS OF HUMAN ANATOMY FOR THE ARTIST
AUTHOR: Stephen Rogers Peck
PRICE: £12.99
PUBLISHER: Oxford University Press
ISBN: 019...0958

BRIDGMAN'S COMPLETE GUIDE TO DRAWING FROM LIFE
AUTHOR: George B. Bridgeman
PRICE: £17...
PUBLISHER: Sterling Publishing
ISBN: 0806930152

NEXT MONTH
Don't miss next issue, we will be focusing on individual body parts in greater detail.

TURN PHOTOS INTO MAGICAL ART

Anne-Claire Payet guides you through the steps of photo manipulation to create this fantasy image.

Artist
PROFILE

Anne-Claire Payet

COUNTRY: France
CLIENTS: PSD Magazine, Black Coat Press

Anne-Claire is an illustrator and graphic designer, specialising in photo manipulation and digital illustration. She's inspired by fantasy, mythology, legends and metal music.
www.chrysantis.net

Do you dream of creating pictures inspired by fairytales and legends? I will talk you through the process. I am using my piece, 'Immortel' for this exercise, which was inspired by the mythical unicorn. We'll be using Photoshop and working in the fundamental techniques of photo manipulation. I'll show you some of the secrets of cropping and other classical techniques. Your drawing skills are very important to this kind of work.

1 The unicorn

This first step is to find good quality pictures that are suitable for manipulation. We need a horse, a beach and an image of the sky. You'll find the files on the DVD. You need to cut out and edit them. First up is the horse. To cut it out, you have a choice between three tools: the Pen, the Lasso and Eraser (or Extract, in the last version of Photoshop). I used Extract found in Filter>Extract.

Once the cutout is done, import it into a new document. First, put the horse's mane and tail on new layers. Name it 'Mane.' Next, import the sky and the sea into this same file. Open your files and do a Copy>Paste (PC: Ctrl C/Ctrl+V or Mac: Command C/V). On the horse layer, go to and apply

4 Fantasy feel
The final step is a little secret touch that I use to make a picture look much more fantastical. Flatten the image or merge all layers using the Layers palette. Duplicate the now-solitary background layer so you have a copy of it above the original. On the top layer apply Filter>Blur>Gaussian Blur. Set the Blur slider to 4 per cent and in the Layers palette choose the Soft Light blending mode. Finally, if you wish to refine the colour of your picture, do so by tweaking the settings in the Hue/Saturation dialog. ●

Image>Adjustments>Desaturate. In the same menu apply Luminosity and Contrast. Enter values: Luminosity +18, Contrast +1k
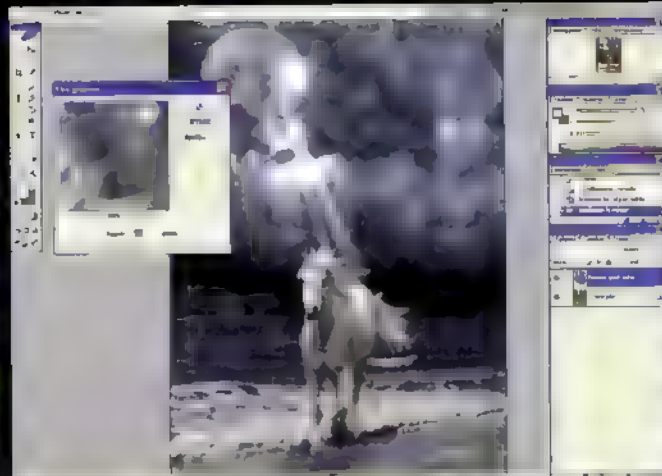
2 The horn
You are now in a position to draw the horn. Use the Lasso tool to draw it in grey. Now add a Layer Style: Layer>Layer Style, and then tick Outer Glow, Inner Glow, Bevel & Emboss, Texture and finally Satin. You can put a further, more personal decoration on it if you wish. Rotate the horn until it is in a natural position, using the Rotate command: Edit>Transform> Rotate. Next, we need to add some realism to the image. The horse looks like it is flying, so we have to add a shadow. First, apply a black colour to a lassoed shaped, then put this layer underneath the horse layer and choose the Overlay blending mode in the Layers Palette.
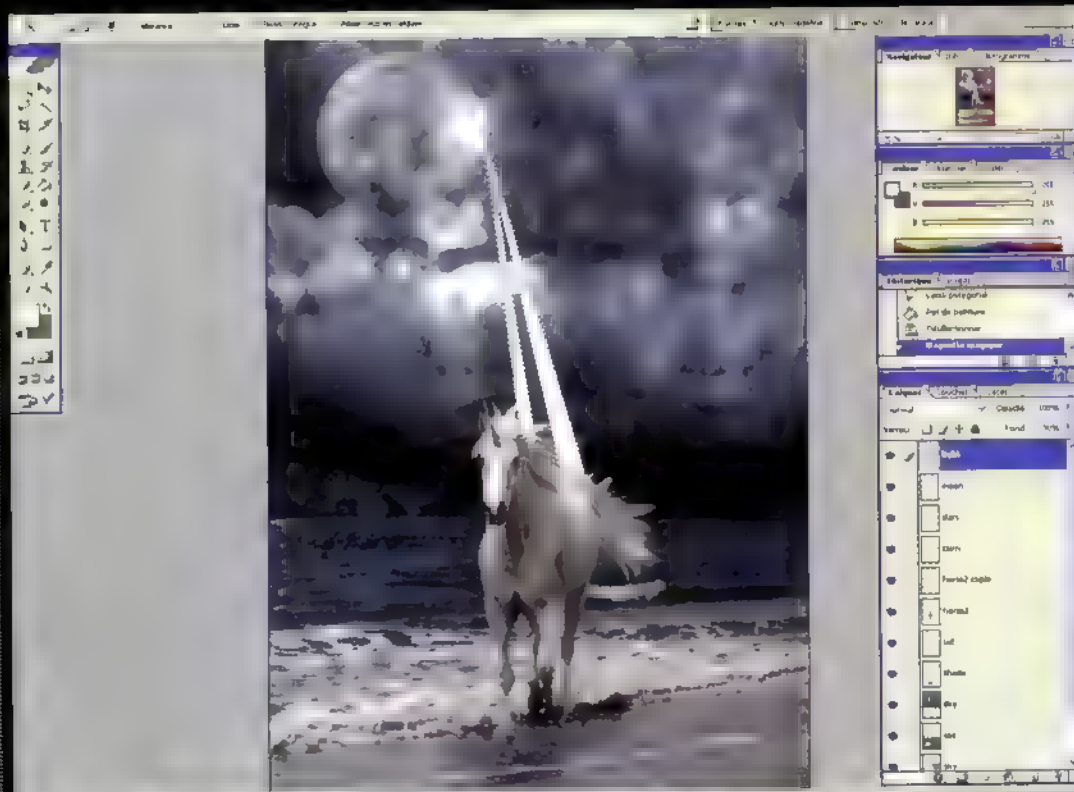
3 The scene
Our scene takes place during a fine summer night, so there has to be a moon and stars in a beautiful sky. We've supplied you with a moon brush on the ImagineFX DVD – just load it into Photoshop using the Brushes palette and paint it in the sky. You'll find some stars in Photoshop's Custom Shapes palette. Use them to spangle the sky, on a new Layer. You can put some on the horse too, if you like. Apply some small white spots (using the Blur tool) in order to enhance the fantasy feel of the unicorn. You can change the colour of

the sky for a moodier feel with the Hue/Saturation dialog. To do so, go to Image>Adjustments>Hue/Saturation and experiment until you find a tone you are happy with. You can also add lights in the sky just as I have done. To do this, create a new layer and with the Lasso tool draw the light shapes. Make a copy of the layer and fill the selection with white. Apply a motion blur to using Filter>Blur>Motion Blur.

COLOUR

Mattias Snygg talks you through some of the inner workings of one of his alien art creations, called **Space Adventure**.

PROFILE

Mattias Snygg
COUNTRY: Sweden
CLIENTS: White Wolf
Publishing, Wizards of
the Coast

Mattias studied
painting and
sculpture and
he is now a
concept artist
living in Sweden. He
works for video game
developer, Starbreeze
www.mattiassnygg.com

T here's something fundamentally appealing about space-men in leather jackets, friendly humanoid aliens and space-girls in tight bodysuits. There's a charming innocence to people flying around in space and landing on all sorts of weird planets, getting caught up in adventure and romance in alien worlds...

It kind of makes you wish it was you with that cool zap-gun and the '50s leather jacket. People have complained that the alien in this picture looks too much like Jar Jar Binks from Star Wars, and as stupid as it may sound this was entirely coincidental. I just didn't see it until it was too late. I hated that character.

The colour in this piece is intended to add 'air' and atmosphere to the scene. I wanted the viewer to smell the breeze of this alien land and to get a sense of playful adventure. I started with a brown and ochre base, to provide a warm foundation for the painting. I've heard people say that warm sells better, but I don't really know if that's true. The painters of old did it like this, and if it isn't broken why fix it? With an under painting in shades of brown, I started to

Below. Using a brown and ochre base provides a warm foundation for the painting.
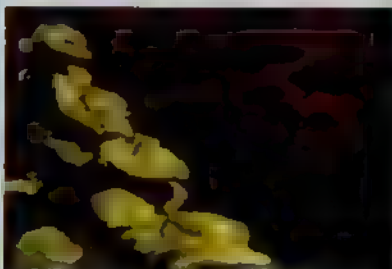
add accents of colour, for instance the dark red on our alien hero, and the yellow hair on his human side-kick.

To get the most out of all these warm colours I needed something for them to play off. If everything's in brown, red and yellow it may well look pretty but it doesn't get dynamic and punchy. A blue sky provides that much-needed contrast, and with the sky in place all the warm colours tend to appear even warmer. Try covering the sky with your hand and

The Photoshop colour-picker tells me the leaves are yellow, but they don't look yellow

keep it like that for a little while to let your eyes adjust. When you remove it, it should bring a whole new dimension to the painting. In my head this effect almost makes a sound: "Swoooosh!"

Take a look at the green leaves at the bottom. The Photoshop colour-picker tells me that they're all yellow, but they don't appear yellow at all. This is because the surrounding colours are mostly red. This is exactly the same effect as with the sky; as soon as you have a strong red on a painting everything else tends to appear greener. You can try this by painting a neutral grey next to a bright red. The effect is quite remarkable.

Are these leaves really yellow? Painting a strong red next to other colours makes them appear greener

Painter & Photoshop

HOW TO DRAW MANGA

Joanna Zhou explains the basics of creating an illustration in this popular style using Photoshop and Painter.

This tutorial guides you through the process of drawing and colouring a manga picture. Manga artwork often suffers the unfair stigma of appearing all the same. Although there are general stylistic conventions, every artist interprets it differently, creating a host of unique styles. The more you draw, the faster you will discover your own style, both in character design and colouring.

The colouring technique outlined here was done in Photoshop CS and Painter

IX. I also used a graphics tablet, which is an invaluable tool for anyone going into digital art. Wacom tablets often come with a free version of Painter Essentials. Although it's not as good as the full version, the effects demonstrated in this tutorial can be re-created (with a bit of practice) in Painter Essentials.

I like to sketch and ink by hand, then scan the outlines and colour them on the computer. Great care should be taken over the sketch because it forms the backbone of your work. Even the best

colouring technique won't be able to salvage a poor, out-of-perspective drawing. When sketching, I check for mistakes by holding the drawing up to a mirror. Inking is done in black ink, with a thin fineliner or nib pen.

When working digitally, my files will most likely be in PSD format (to support layers). The final image is then flattened and saved as a TIFF or JPEG (at least 300 DPI). TIFF is better quality for print. JPEG has a very small file size, making it suitable for pictures on the web.

① Style conventions

I begin by sketching out the image using a 2B mechanical pencil. I use a putty rubber because regular erasers can damage the paper surface and leave dust. A good trick for creating an instant, dynamic composition is to use a simple pose but draw it with the paper sideways. Some manga guidelines to bear in mind are the conventions for mouth, eyes and hair. The mouth is kept very small, like a rosebud, particularly when drawing female characters.

Eyes are definitely the number one manga trademark. They should be large and expressive, with graceful eyebrows and lashes. I like to draw hair as thick, almost three-dimensional strands because I find it a lot easier to colour in later on if I can see where the separate layers of hair begin and end. Female manga body proportions are usually petite, with skinny wrists, tiny waists and thin legs; albeit frequently with large breasts!

② Scan the image

The sketch is inked with a thin nib pen and drawing ink. I often vary the thickness of the lines to create a feeling of depth. For example, the contrast between the girl's thick outline and the thin cherry blossoms immediately indicate foreground and background.
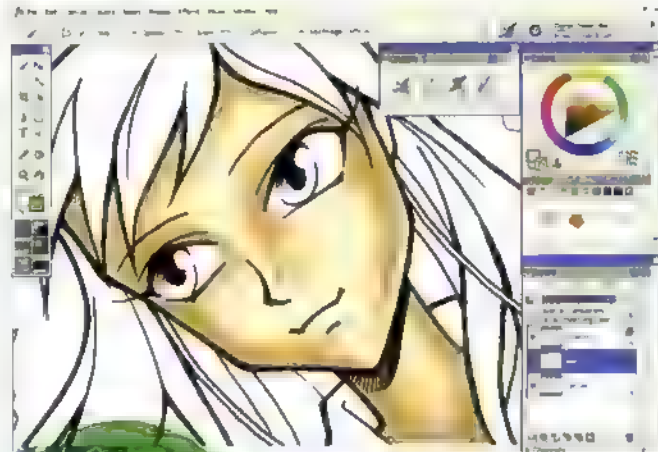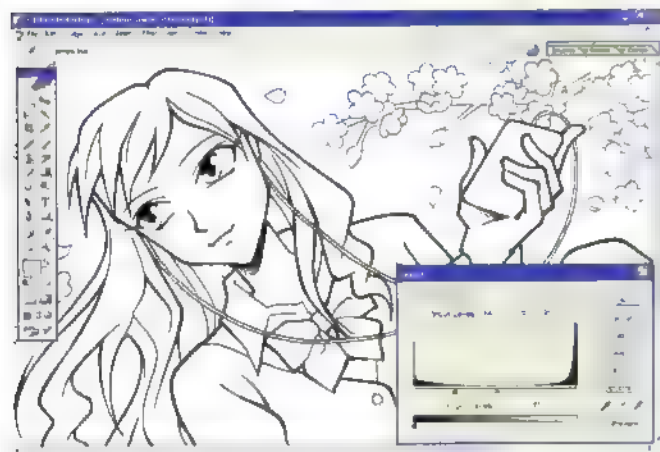
After inking, I scan the image at 300 DPI and open it in Photoshop to adjust contrast. Sometimes it's enough to go to Image>Adjust>Auto levels.

To gain more control I then select Levels so that I can manually tweak the contrast. Ideally, you should have a crisp black outline (but not overly jagged), with no traces of pencil. This is now ready for colouring in.

③ Outline work

The outlines are opened in Painter. I like to copy and paste the outlines on to a new layer, and set this to Multiply. This enables me to colour freely but still retain the black outlines, which show through. I also keep a completely white layer under the outlines to act as a backdrop.

④ Gather your tools

Before beginning to paint, I drag my choice of tools on to a custom palette so that I'll always have them on the screen. For this project, I choose Digital
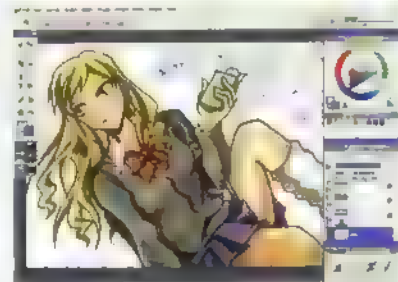
Watercolour>Broad Water Brush, Blenders>Grainy Water, Airbrushes> Digital Airbrush, Gouache > Opaque Smooth Brush 10.

⑤ Colouring

I begin by colouring the face using a digital watercolour. First, I cover everything with a light skin tone. I then
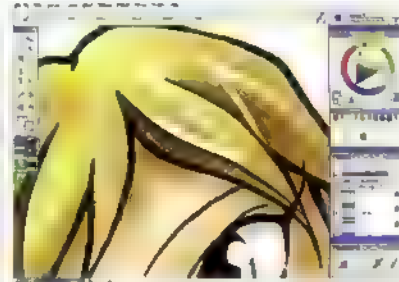
introduce shadows with a medium skin tone and create some depth with a very dark tone.

The mixer palette in Painter enables you to paint swatches of a chosen colour so you always have the right shade at hand. The shading can be rough and scribbly, as that's where the Blender tool comes in handy. Before using it, I have to dry the watercolour (Layers>Dry Digital Watercolour or Ctrl+Shift+L). Then I take the Blender and smooth over what I've just drawn to create perfectly blended shadows.

⑥ Airbrushing

The rest of the image is coloured in using exactly the same technique. The Airbrush can be used to create blush on the cheeks, add highlights to clothing or correct mistakes.

⑦ Gouache work

The Gouache brush is used for zig-zag hair highlights, which are another typical feature of manga illustration. I also like to add single, wispy strands of hair, in which case I work above the outline layer.

⑧ Final polish

When the colouring process is complete, I save and open it again in Photoshop. You can give the illustration a final polish by using the Hue/Saturation/ Colour Balance editors in Photoshop, colouring in the outlines (see Pro Secrets), or resizing and cropping. Once everything looks good, Flatten (or Merge Visible and discard hidden layers).

Next month in...

ImagineFX

MASTER THE TECHNIQUES YOU NEED TO CREATE AMAZING DIGITAL ART!

FEATURING:

Martin Bland Meet the man behind some of the most haunting sci-fi imagery ever PLUS exclusive tutorial

Henning Ludvigsen The Norwegian master dishes out more fantastic digital art advice

Ryan Church Learn Corel Painter with the man behind the art of Star Wars: Episode III

Poser & Bryce

CREATE A SCI-FI CHARACTER

Tips and techniques for creating a classic sci-fi character image using budget 3D software, by **Adam Benton**

Artist PROFILE

Adam Benton
COUNTRY: UK
CLIENTS: Saatchi &
Saatchi, Visa, Freeserve

Adam is a
freelance
illustrator who
has worked
for high-
profile clients. His high-
quality imagery is used in
entertainment, corporate
publishing, advertising,
scientific and medical
industries. His personal
love is still sci-fi art.
www.kromekat.com

DVD Assets

The files you need
are on the DVD
FILES: BGProj
FOLDERS: Daz files
SOFTWARE:
Poser & iClone

There's something of a tradition
within the various genres of
science fiction and fantasy,
for glamorous females to be at
the forefront of the story, whether it be
a film, book or artwork. A strong female
lead heroine appeals to both men and
woman alike – the ability to fight an
assortment of alien foes with futuristic
hardware (as well as her fists), balanced
with an ability to remain sexy, often with
unfeasibly well-kept hair and make-up, is
a winning formula.

There are many examples of this
imagery in sci-fi art. I'm going to show
you some of the techniques and tools
commonly used by digital artists in this
genre. I'll use the popular budget 3D
software packages, E Frontier Poser and
Daz Bryce, for the bulk of the tutorial and
Photoshop (or a similar 2D image editor)
to add the final refinements.

I'm not a great fan of 'repeat every step
I take to create exactly the same image'
tutorials. My preferred approach is to
explain the basic choices, techniques and

artistic reasoning behind certain
methods and tools, which you can
interpret and expand for use in your own
sci-fi character images.

And finally, to accompany the tutorial,
Daz 3D has generously provided some
of the items that were used in its creation
for you to apply to your own sci-fi art. On
the DVD you'll find Daz's premier female
Poser model Victoria 3, her advanced face
morphs, the Flip Hairstyle prop and a
complete sci-fi costume to dress her in.
See page 100 for our Daz upgrade offer.

1 Choose your model

Begin by choosing which Poser figure is most suitable for your job. I've selected Daz's Victoria 3, because of her physical versatility and the abundance of third-party props and clothing available in online Poser content stores. I start by selecting and deleting the default figure in the Preview window, and loading Victoria 3 (provided on the cover DVD) from the Library palette on the right of the Poser layout.

2 Customisation tips

Next, I customise the figure using the powerful V3 face and body morphs. With Victoria 3 you can either install them in one go, or one by one. The advantage of installing the lot at once is that you can try them all to see the range of possibilities for customisation. I'd recommend this if it's the first time you've used a Poser model. A disadvantage is that the increased file size and complexity make it difficult to work with the 'fully loaded' figure.

I've chosen to 'Inject' the expression/feature morphs that I know I want to use, by clicking on the head of the Poser figure and browsing the list of morph categories available in: Poses>Pose>V3 All Morphs etc. I choose a selection of morph types to inject. I add simple morphs to alter the
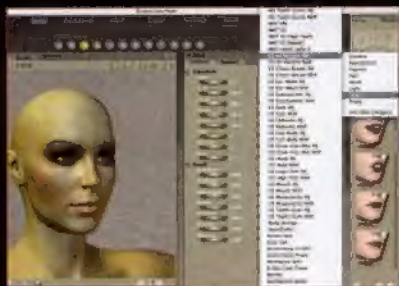
angle of her brows, nose size and to part her lips slightly. I then add a skin texture I bought from Daz, to further customise her look.

3 Correct stance

I want to get the pose right before adding any props or clothes. Our heroine will be holding a gun in her right hand and a helmet in her left, and I want her to appear dominant, so I position the scene preview camera at a lowered viewpoint. I tilt her head and neck down a little and rotate her eyes directly at the viewer. You can click on each of the limbs in turn, and use the parameter dials to rotate, twist and move them into the required pose. Move things in small increments at first, then move back down the hierarchy (hand>forearm>shoulder, and so on) to make finer adjustments, to prevent any major mesh distortions.

4 Dressing your figure

The next stage is to add props and clothes. I've selected a few items from the Daz and Renderosity stores, including a bodysuit that had morphs to allow it to be unzipped at various points. To add an item of clothing, browse the Figures heading in the Library palette. Choose and highlight the item and click on the 'double tick' button. To fit the item to her
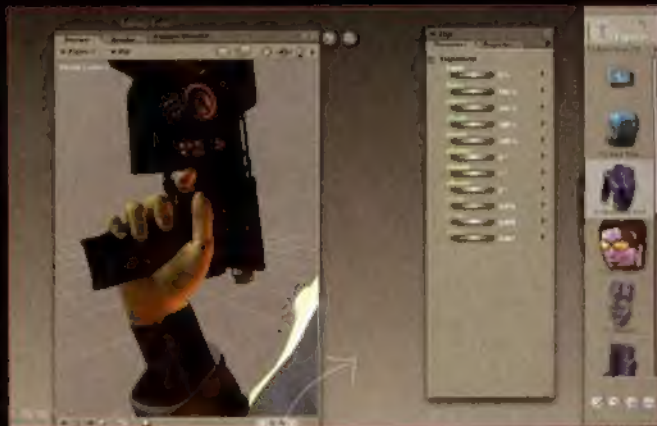
Shortcuts
Restore element
Ctrl+E (PC)
Apple+E (Mac)
While posing limbs in Poser, use this shortcut to 'restore element' if it goes horribly wrong!

PRO SECRETS

Natural poses
Posing a figure naturally is made much easier if you use a reference of some sort. This can come from many sources. In this case, I asked my wife to model for me, giving her a little direction as to what I wanted to see. As well as giving me some unique photo references for the correct lines and weight of the pose, I could ascertain what was comfortable, balanced and natural in reality.

body, I select Conform to… from the Figure menu. In the small dialog box that opens, I select Figure 1 (your character base model) and click OK.

5 Adding 'smart props'

This process needs to be repeated for each item of clothing. Some items, such as the gun, are 'smart props', and they're automatically placed in the right location and locked to the hand's movements ('parented'). I just need to wrap the hand and fingers around the gun's grip and trigger, which is best achieved by moving each of the digits in small increments.

6 Final touches

Our heroine is fully clad. When layering clothes in this way, the meshes can become intersected, allowing inner garments to show through. We can partly rectify this by scaling up the outer items a little. I've chosen a hair model (you'll find the 'flip' hairstyle on the ImagineFX DVD and given her a helmet prop under her arm. I don't conform it; I move it into position using the Transform tools (xTran etc).

7 Removing elements

To export the model to Bryce for scene setup and rendering, I select File>Export>Wavefront OBJ. In the Hierarchy Selection dialog that follows, is a list of model elements. I remove parts that will be obscured by outer layers, such as hands hidden by gloves.

8 Importing to Bryce

I open Bryce, select File>Import Object and in the dialog box I navigate to the model exported from Poser. Bryce will import the object. Poser will automatically create a material reference file (.mtl). This prompts us to direct Bryce to the Poser items' textures, so it can load them in with the mesh. If they don't load, the textures will be within: Poser/ Runtime/Textures/... directories. Once imported, I lower the figure using the small arrow beside the selected group.

9 Editing textures

The textures will look fine, but the transparency in the hair, eyelashes and eyebrows will be missing. In the bottom right of the interface is the Select palette, and at the end is a dropdown arrow

PRO SECRETS

Plop rendering
Use the 'plop render' function often. This will save a lot of time, because you can simply select and render the small area you're working on at the time. To activate this function, make sure the sixth icon down the right-hand side contains a red rectangle (active). Click and drag a box/marquee on your render, and click the spheres next to it to render that area.
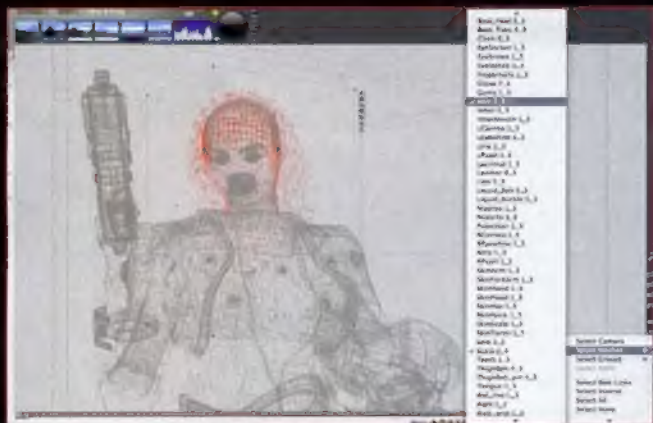
enabling us to select items in the scene. I need both parts of the hair, so I select the hair, hold Shift and re-enter the menu and click on the Scalp. I can edit both as one item as they share a texture map.

10 Into the Materials Lab

With these two items selected (red) I click on the small M next to them. This opens the Materials Lab, where I can alter the settings of the items' textures. I click on the second small 'glass bead' on the right, to open the Texture Source Editor and import the hair's transparency file into the middle image channel. I click Load, and navigate to the appropriate transparency map for the hair model. I return to the Materials Lab and make sure there is a small blue bead in the transparency channel A (click in that area) and Blend Transparency is selected. I repeat the selection and material editing process for the brows and lashes.

11 Readymade background

On the DVD, I've created a sci-fi set model already imported into a Bryce file, so it can be merged with your character file. Go to: File>Merge and navigate to the BGProp file. The background will be loaded into your scene. You may need to scale her up and lower her set position.

12 Transparency maps

Some of the bodysuit will poke through the boots but we can't delete the suit lower leg mesh because the boots aren't tall enough to cover the area. The solution is to use a transparency map to make the area below the boot-top render invisible. We must locate the texture map in Poser's Runtime directory, and open it in a 2D image editor, such as Photoshop. I create a new layer, fill it with white and make a rectangular marquee selection in the lower area, about where the lower leg part of the map is. This is saved as a greyscale jpg file. Back in Bryce, with all of the bodysuit mesh parts selected, I enter the Material Lab>Texture Source Editor (as in step 11), and load the transparency map, just created, into the middle picture box. This removes the bottom of the texture map.

13 Ambiance and depth

Lighting helps define a mood and give depth. The BGProp is set up with three white downward spots to pick out details in the model, and two red omnis in the locks to create atmosphere. A blue omni in the central portal depicts ambient light entering from outside. We can give the model her own light setup to pick out details and create even more mood and definition.

14 Sky lights

In the Sky & Fog mode in Bryce, I enter the Sky Lab and choose Starfield sky preset, with Disable Sun Light selected. This adds instant drama and atmosphere. Every extra light will reflect the atmospheric set lights, and focus the viewers' attention on our character.

15 Light direction

I start by adding a Spotlight in the Create mode. To control where this light shines, I link it to part of the figure mesh. I click on the A (attributes) next to the light, go into the Linking tab and from the Track Object Name dropdown, I select the belt, because this is a good central point.
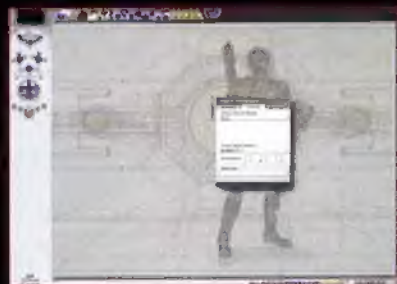

16 Adding more lights

The first light is a cool blue colour to simulate light wrap coming from the portal, off to the left/rear. This helps to give sharp definition to her side, lifting her from the background. I duplicate this light and position it on the right, with its colour changed to a vivid red. This also defines her other side, and simulates

light wrap from the red lock behind her. One more duplication places the light above her head and to the front, with its linking set to her chest. This suggests some main overhead lighting. Another duplicated spot, set to a warm pale orange, is linked to her face, to show her features. A dimly lit, grey omni is placed in the front of the scene, to act as a global/frontal fill. All of the spots use 'fall off' to define how far they cast light, preventing too many confusing floor or background shadows.

17 Tileable textures

Some of the elements still need texturing. For the BG prop, I choose a tileable (repeats with no visible join) texture of rusty painted metal, and a similarly grimy old metal panel texture for the floor. This make the place look aged and richer in character. I select the groups and each mesh element as before, and edit each texture by clicking on the M next to the selected object. Now that she is lit, I tweak the colour of her bodysuit, and give it some 'bump' detail in the Materials Lab.
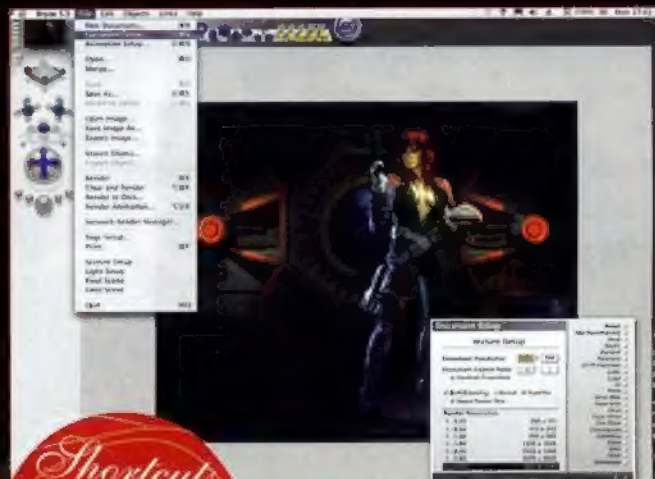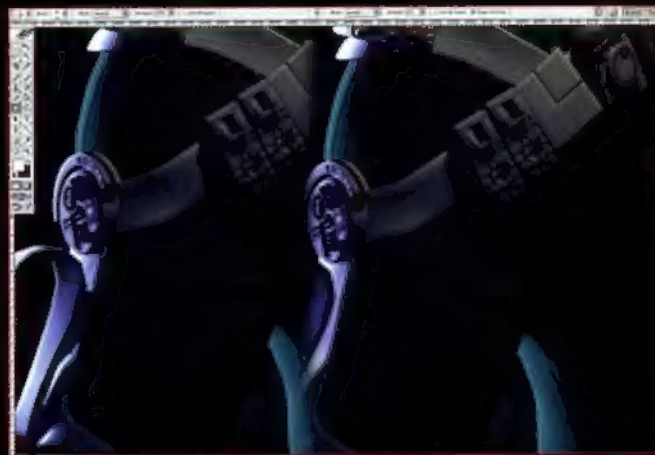
18 Final Bryce tweaks

I tweak my composition in Bryce with the camera navigation tools on the left of the screen, then adjust the light intensity and colour, soften their edges and alter fall off values. I add a second small fill light to her face, slightly to the front, to define her features. I select Document Setup from the File menu, and choose a resolution and ratio to render to. I tick Antialiasing to smooth out the pixels across the image.

19 Photoshop fine-tuning

Once the high-res file is rendered and saved, it can be opened in Photoshop for touch-ups, such as Smudge, Blur, Clone stamp, Dodge and Burn tools and an airbrush, to smooth out mesh artefacts/hard edges and repaint errors. I adjust Brightness and Contrast, duplicate the main layer, blur it by a few pixels, layer it over the base layer and set the screen at 30-50 per cent. This gives a diffused glow. A 1 or 2 per cent Gaussian, monochrome noise integrates it all and makes it feel more grainy and real. ●